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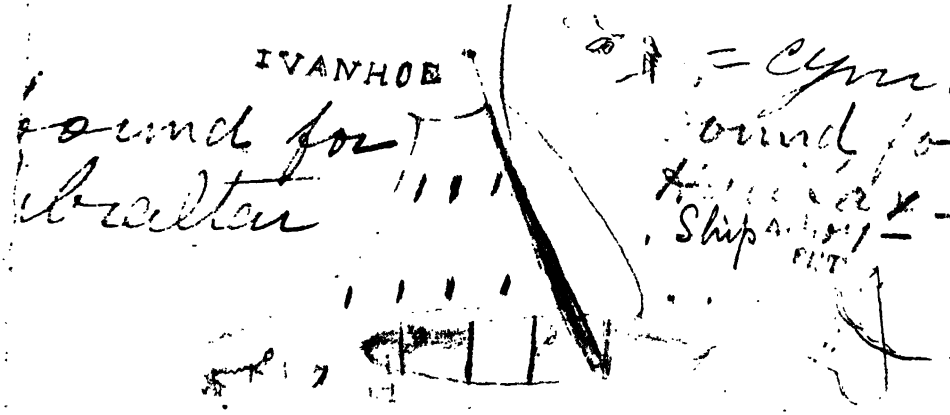

Chas Hemminger. Jr.
Junior Class
So Ca College
San 10th 1884

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Difficulty with Paley's theory is, that he leaves to each individual, to judge for himself what is right & wrong — Fallacy is in this book, namely — whatever is not a fallacy of form, namely whatever [illegible] Keystone of Fallacy of Bentham's system is that "pleasure & pain are the only motives to action", these he says are axiomatic [illegible] which need no proof & he does not try to prove them — His life was spent in making laws & his system of morals was a species of moral Arithmetic —

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MANUAL

OF

SUPPLEMENTARY REFERENCES

TO THE

COURSE OF LECTURES

UPON

MORAL PHILOSOPHY,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE JUNIOR CLASS

OF THE

SOUTH CAROLINA COLLEGE.

by

P. W. Barnwell

Generosa res est—conari alta, tentare et mente majora concipere, quam quæ etiam ingenti animo adornatis effici possint.—*Seneca, de Vita beata. c. xx.*

COLUMBIA, S. C.:
SOUTHERN GUARDIAN STEAM PRESS.
1859.

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The object of this unpretending *brochure* is two fold; to dispense with long, but valuable quotations in a Course of oral instruction, and to furnish the student of Morals with a text book for private study and class-room exercise. But beyond the attainment of these objects the compiler indulges the further hope, that the extracts here furnished, may excite such interest and desire for knowledge in the mind of the student that he will not be satisfied until he has himself gone to the fountain heads of Wisdom and Truth, and there quenched his thirst.

College Campus, Sept. 1st., 1859.

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PLAN

OF THE

COURSE OF LECTURES

UPON

MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

(I.) Introductory Lecture.
(II.) History of Moral Philosophy.
(III.) Criticism of Theories of Morals.
(IV.) Moral Philosophy Proper—Theoretical Part.
(V.) Practical Morals.

(I.) *Introductory Lecture*

Upon the design, scope and dignity of Moral Philosophy—the difficulties of instruction in a Collegiate Course—Text Books and Books of Reference to be used—and some useful hints for prosecuting the study advantageously.

(II.) *The History of Moral Philosophy,*

Chronologically and Biographically, presented with a view to familiarize the mind with the terms and controversies of the science.

(*a.*) *Ancient Ethical Systems.*—Sources of Philosophy—Pythagoras—Socrates—School of Megara—Cyrenaics—Cynics—Plato—Aristotle—Academics—Stoics—Epicureans—Roman Moralists—Cicero—Seneca—Plutarch's Morals.

(*b.*) *Christian Ethics* or *Moral Theology.*—Christ and the Apostles—the Patristic notions and method—Asceticism—Mysticism—Casuistry—Characteristics of the Moral Theology of the Middle Ages.

(*c.*) *Scholastic Ethics,* A. D. 874.—Scotus Erigena—Anselm—Hildebert—Abe-

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lard—Peter of Lombardy—Alexander of Hales—Albertus Magnus—Thos. Aquinas—Duns Scotus—William of Ockham—Laurentius Valla—Vives—Erasmus—Melancthon—Corn. Agrippa.

Sporadic Works and Authors.—Soto—Suarez—Sepulveda—Montagne—Charron—Piccolomini—Campanella—Giordano Bruno—Petrarch—Perkins—Ames—Hall—Sanderson—Taylor.

(*d.*) *Modern Systems of Morals.—Netherland Moralists*—Grotius, Geulincx, Spinoza.

British Moralists.—Hobbes, More, Cumberland, Cudworth, Locke, Shaftesbury, Clarke, Wollaston, Mandeville, Hutcheson, Butler, Balguy, Warburton, Gay, Hartley, Tucker, Hume, Price, Smith, Paley, Gisborne, Stewart, Reid, Brown, Ferguson, Bentham.

French Moralists.—De la Motte le Vayer, Bossuet, Fenelon, Bayle, Huet, Rochefoucauld, Malebranche, Diderot, de la Mettrie, Helvetius, Rousseau, Dalembert, Mablay.

German Moralists.—Leibnitz, Canz, Wolf, Baumgarten Crusius, Meier, Kant, Mendelsohn, Garve, Schmid, Schleirmacher, Marheineke de Wette, Platner, Jacobi.

(*e.*) *Cursory glance at the Sympathetic developement of the science at the present time, in England, France and America.*—McCosh, Whewell, Cousin, Jonffroy, Thornwell, Wayland.

(III.) *Criticism of Theories of Morals:*

History of the Systems of Moral Philosophy, presented according to the leading idea, developed and criticised.

Classification of Systems.—Theories of Dependent Morality—Theories of Independent Morality—Theories in reference to the Nature and Origin of our Moral Perceptions—Theories in reference to the Criterion of Morals.

(a) Theories which make morality *dependent:*

(1) Upon *consequences* beneficial to self—*Selfish Theory.*

(2) " " to others—*Disinterested Theory.*

(3) " " to mankind generally—*Utilitarian Theory.*

(4) Upon the *Will of God.*

(5) Upon *Law, Education* and *Custom.*

(b) Theories which make Morals *independent* of any artificial or extraneous principle, but directly referable to (1.) Reason—*Rationalistic Theory.*

(2.) Sympathy or Sense—*Sentimental Theory.*

(3.) Conscience—*Conscience Theory.*

(IV.) *Speculative Morality*—(Of Virtue, Duty, Right, and the contrary.)

Definitions of the Science.

Basis of System.

Is there a Conscience?

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What is its Nature and Constitution?

The Laws and operations of Conscience.

Of Happiness—of Obligation—of Merit and of Demerit—of Right and Wrong—of Virtue and the Virtues—of Temperance, Truth, Benevolence, Justice, Piety, Humanity.

(V.) *Practical Morality*—(Of Virtues, Duties, Rights, and their contraries.)

Duties to
- (*A.*) *self* — as an *animal* / as a *moral* — being,
- (*B.*) *Fellowmen* — *Family*, *Business*, *Political*, *Ecclesiastic* — Relations.
- (*C.*) *Superior Being*—*God.*
- (*D.*) *Inferior Creation* — *Brutes*, *Inanimate* nature.

(*A.*) (1.) Duties to one's *self*, considered as possessed of an *animal* organization.

(*a.*) Self preservation—of Self Defence, of Suicide.

(*b.*) Self conservation—of Frugality, of Drunkenness, of Gluttony.

(*c.*) Self purification—of Chastity, of Fornication, of Seduction, of Gentility.

(2.) Duties to one's *self* considered as a *Moral being.*

Of Truth—of Lies.

Of Honor—of Duelling.

Of Self command—of Anger—of Resentment—of Revenge.

(*B.*) *Duties to Fellow men.*

(1.) *Family* Relations.

(*a*) Of Husband and Wife, of Adultery, of Polygamy, of Divorce.

(*b*) Of Parent and Child.

(*c*) Of Brethren.

(*d*) Of Master and Servant.

(*e*) Of Friendship.

(*f.*) Charity in *deed*—of Philanthropy, of Alms, of Hospitality, of Gratitude.

Charity in *word*—of Liberality of Judgment, of Detraction, of Sneering.

Charity in *thought*—of Sympathy, of Envy, of Malice.

(2.) *Business Relations*—(*a*) Of Buyer and Seller.

(*b*) Of Promiser and Promisee.

(*c*) Of Borrower and Lender.

(*d*) Of Employer and Employee.

(*e*) Of Principal and Agent.

(*f*) Of Partners.

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Morals of Trade.—Of *Gaming*, of *Speculation.*

Of Wills—of Insurances.

(3.) *Political Relations.*—Of Property, of Government, of Laws, of Crimes, of Patriotism, of Slavery, of Elections.

(4.) *Of Ecclesiastical* relations generally.

(*C.*) *Duty to God.*—Of Love, of Worship, of Prayer, of Oaths, of Vows, of Sabbatical Institutions.

(*D.*) *Duties to Brute and Inanimate Creation.*

To Brutes.—Of Humanity—of Cruelty.

To Inanimate Creation.—Use and not Waste—of cultivation of the Arts and Sciences—of Æsthetic tastes and their connection with Morals.

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LIST OF EMINENT MEN

WHO HAVE

CONTRIBUTED TO MORAL SCIENCE.

ARRANGED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER.

B. C.	
584–504	Pythagoras,
500	Heraclitus, *flo.*
467–398	Socrates,
426–347	Plato,
384–321	Aristotle & Pyrrho,
342–270	Epicurus,
324	Diogenes,
314–261	Zeno,
213–130	Carneades,
122	Panœtius, *flourished*
108–44	Cicero,
A. D.	L.
1–65	Seneca,
82	Epictetus, *lived.*
99	Plutarch,
162	Marc. Atonnius,
170	Sextus Empiricus,
250	Plotinus,
270	Porphyrus,
331	Jamblichus,
485	Proclus.,
496	Stobœus.,
550	Simplicius,
874	Scotus Eugena,
1034–1100	Anselm,
1079–1143	Abelard, Hildebert,
1150	Peter Lombard,
1173	Richard of St. Victor,
1180	John of Salisbury,
1193–1280	Albertus Magnus,

A. D.	
1224–1274	Thomas Aquinas,
1245	Alexander of Hales,
1274	Bonaventura,
1309	Duns Scotus,
1457	Laurentius Valla,
1499	Marcus Ficinus,
1518	Melancthon,
1525	Pomponatius,
1535	Hein. Corn. Agrippa,
1541	Vives,
1494–1560	Soto,
1580	Giordano Bruno,
	Montagne,
1582	Perkins, *flourished,*
1603	Charron,
1604	Piccolomini,
1538–1617	Suarez,
1639	Campanella,
1585–1645	Grotius,
1650	Ames, *flourished,*
1660	Bp. Sanderson, *flo.*
"	Jeremy Taylor, *flo.*
1667	Geulincx,
1672	De la Motte le Vayer,
1677	Spinoza,
1588–1684	Hobbes,
1685	Henry More,
1617–1688	Cudworth,
1691	Horneius,
1704	Locke,

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A. D.	
1627–1704	Bossuet,
1706	Bayle,
1671–1713	Shaftesbury,
1651–1715	Fenelon,
1638–1715	Malebranche,
1646–1716	Leibnitz,
1632–1718	Cumberland,
1724	Huet and Gay,
1721	Wollaston,
1728	Thomasius,
1733	Mandeville,
1661–1737	Buffier,
1694–1747	Hutcheson,
1692–1752	Butler,
1753	Canz,
1754	Christ'n. Wolf,
1757	Hartley & la Mettrie,
1703–1758	Jon. Edwards,
1762	Baumgarten,
1771	Helvetius,

A. D.	
1772	Crusius,
1705–1774	Tucker,
1711–1776	Hume,
1778	Meier,
1779	Rosseau.
1783	Dalembert,
1785	Mably,
1786	Mendelsohn,
1723–1790	Smith,
1723–1791	Price,
1796	Reid,
1798	Garve,
1804	Kant,
1812	Schmid,
1814	Fichte,
1743–1815	Paley and Gisborne,
1816	Ferguson,
1818	Platner,
1819	Jacobi,
1778–1820	Brown.

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PART I.

HISTORY OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

It is impossible for a science to rest in ignorance of its own history; it is impossible for the human mind to permit it. However clearly it may be demonstrated in its own eyes, a science cannot have perfect confidence in itself, unless it has obtained the secret of its errors; it cannot be sure that it has arrived at the True, except when it has explained to itself how it has passed through, and how it must have needs passed through the False.—*Jouffroy.*

(1.) Ethical views of Pythagoras.

The Pythagoreans were the first, we are told by Aristotle, who attempted to determine any points in moral philosophy. All, however, on this subject that they carried out scientifically, and without dependence on their general view of things, was of little value apparently. Whether they established any doctrine of the supreme good, or the ultimate object of all rational action, is very doubtful; so very discrepant are the statements of later writers on this point: that, however, they investigated the notion of virtue, would result from Philolaus having denoted virtue to be the property of the moral life. They are said to have called virtue a harmony; which definition, however, requires to be further limited, by shewing in what they supposed the harmony of virtue to consist. It is not improbable that they held it to be the coincidence of the rational and the irrational throughout the whole course of life. For, on the one hand, they employed music both to soothe the passions, and to excite the active energies. On the other, they strove to attain to a consistency and agreement in their whole life, as is expressed in their precept: Man ought

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to consider both the past and the future with a moral aim. What, it is said, they taught of particular virtues, is for the most part questionable or worthless; in the case of justice alone are we credibly informed that they said it was a "similarly similar number;" by which they meant to convey the maxim, that it is just that every one should receive according to his deserts. No one will wonder to find so rude a notion in the infancy of ethics. *Ritter's History of Ancient Philosophy, vol.* 1., *p.* 414.

(2.) Character and Method of Socrates' Philosophizing.

The philosophizing of Socrates was limited and restricted by his opposition, partly to the preceding, and partly to the Sophistic philosophy.

Philosophy before the Socrates had been in its essential character investigation of nature. But in Socrates, the human mind, for the first time, turned itself in upon itself, upon its own being, and that too in the most immediate manner, by conceiving itself as active, moral spirit. The positive philosophizing of Socrates, is exclusively of an ethical character, exclusively an inquiry into the nature of virtue, so exclusively, and so one-sidedly, that, as is wont to be the case upon the appearance of a new principle, it even expressed a contempt for the striving of the entire previous period, with its natural philosophy, and its mathematics. Setting everything under the stand point of immediate moral law, Socrates was so far from finding any object in "irrational" nature worthy of study, that he rather, in a kind of general teleological manner, conceived it simply in the light of external means for the attainment of external ends; yea, he would not even go out to walk, as he says in the Phrædrus of Plato, since one can learn nothing from trees and districts of country. Self-knowledge the Delphic (γνῶθι σεαυτόν) appeared to him the only object worthy of a man, as the starting point of all philosophy.

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Knowledge of every other kind, he pronounced so insignificant and worthless, that he was wont to boast of ignorance, and to declare that he excelled other men in wisdom only in this, that he was conscious of his own ignorance. (Plat. *Ap. S.* 21; 23.)

The other side of the Socratic philosophizing, is its opposition to the philosophy of the time. His object, as is well understood, could have been only this, to place himself upon the same position as that occupied by the philosophy of the Sophists, and overcome it on its own ground, and by its own principles. That Socrates shared in the general position of the Sophists, and even had many features of external resemblance to them—the Socratic irony, for instance—has been remarked above. Many of his assertions, particularly these propositions, that no man knowingly does wrong, and if a man were knowingly to lie, or to do some other wrong act, still he would be better than he who should do the same unconsciously, at first sight bear a purely Sophistic stamp. The great fundamental thought of the Sophistic philosophy, that all moral acting must be a conscious act, was also his. But whilst the Sophists made it their object, through subjective reflection to confuse and to break up all stable convictions, to make all rules relating to outward conduct impossible, Socrates had recognized thinking as the activity of the universal principle, free, objective thought as the measure of all things, and, therefore, instead of referring moral duties, and all moral action to the fancy and caprice of the individual, had rather referred all to true knowledge, to the essence of spirit. It was this idea of knowledge that led him to seek, by the process of thought, to gain a conceivable objective ground, something real, abiding, absolute, independent of the arbitrary volitions of the subject, and to hold fast to unconditioned moral laws.

The Socratic method has a twofold side, a negative and a positive one. The negative side is the well known Socratic

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irony. The philosopher takes the attitude of ignorance, and would apparently let himself be instructed by those with whom he converses, but through the questions which he puts, the unexpected consequences which he deduces, and the contradictions in which he involves the opposite party, he soon leads them to see that their supposed knowledge would only entangle and confuse them. In the embarrassment in which they now find themselves placed, and seeing that they do not know what they supposed, this supposed knowledge completes its own destruction, and the subject who had pretended to wisdom learns to distrust his previous opinions and firmly held notions. "What we knew, has contradicted itself," is the refrain of the most of these conversations.

This result of the Socratic method was only to lead the subject to know that he knew nothing, and a great part of the dialogues of Xenophon and Plato go no further than to represent ostensibly this negative result. But there is yet another element in his method in which the irony loses its negative appearance.

The positive side of the Socratic method is the so-called obsterics or art of intellectual midwifery. Socrates compares himself with his mother Phænarete, a midwife, because his position was rather to help others bring forth thoughts than to produce them himself, and because he took upon himself to distinguish the birth of an empty thought from one rich in its content. (Plato *Theatætus*, *p.* 149.) Through this art of midwifery the philosopher, by his assiduous questioning, by his interrogatory dissection of the notions of him with whom he might be conversing, knew how to elicit from him a thought of which he had previously been unconscious, and how to help him to the birth of a new thought. A chief means in this operation was the method of *induction*, or the leading of the representation to a conception. The philosopher, thus, starting from some individual, concrete case, and seiz-

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ing hold of the most common notions concerning it, and finding illustrations in the most ordinary and trivial occurrences, knew how to remove by his comparisons that which was individual, and by thus separating the accidental and contingent from the essential, could bring up to consciousness a universal truth and a universal determination—in other words, could form conceptions. In order *e. g.* to find the conception of justice or valor, he would start from individual examples of them, and from these deduce the universal character or conception of these virtues. From this we see that the direction of the Socratic induction was to gain logical *definitions*. I define a conception when I develope what it is, its essence, its content. I define the conception of justice when I set up the common property and logical unity of all its different modes of manifestation. Socrates sought to go no farther than this. "To seek for the essence of virtue," says an Aristotelian writing (*Eth.* 1. 5,) "Socrates regarded as the problem of philosophy, and hence, since he regarded all virtue as a knowing, he sought to determine in respect of justice or valor what they might really be, *i. e.* he investigated their essence or conception." From this it is very easy to see the connection which his practical strivings. He went back to the conception of every individual virtue, *e. g.* justice, only because he was convinced that the knowledge of this conception, the knowledge of it for every individual case, was the surest guide for every moral relation. Every moral action, he believed, should start as a conscious action from the conception. *Schwegler's History of Philos, American edition, p.* 62.

(3.) Plato's Opinion of Virtue.

It consists according to men in that state of mind in which every faculty, confines itself within its proper sphere without encroaching upon that of any other, and performed its proper

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office with that precise degree of strength and vigor which belongs to it. *Adam Smith's Moral Sent., p.* 479.

Virtue he represented as the harmony of the whole soul;—as a peace between all its principles and desires, assigning to each as much space as they can occupy without encroaching on each other;—as a state of perfect health, in which every function was performed with ease, pleasure, and vigor;—as a well-ordered commonwealth, where the obedient passions executed with energy the laws and commands of reason. The vicious mind presented the odious character, sometimes of discord, of war;—sometimes of disease;—always of passions warring with each other in eternal anarchy. Consistent with himself, and at peace with his fellows, the good man felt in the quiet of his conscience a foretaste of the approbation of God. *Mackintosh's Ethical Diss., p.* 72.

(4.) Opinions of Aristotle upon Virtue.

Virtue, according to Aristotle, consists in the habit of mediocrity according to right reason. Every particular virtue, according to him, lies in a kind of middle, between two opposite vices, of which the one offends from being too much, the other from being too little affected by a particular species of objects. Thus the virtue of fortitude or courage lies in the middle between the opposite vices of cowardice and of presumptuous rashness, of which the one offends from being too much, and the other from being too little affected by the objects of fear.

According to Aristotle, indeed, virtue did not so much consist in those moderate and right affections, as in the habit of this moderation. In order to understand this, it is to be observed, that virtue may be considered either as the quality of an action, or as the quality of a person. Considered as the quality of an action, it consists, even according to Aristotle, in the reasonable moderation of the affection from which the

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action proceeds, whether this disposition be habitual to the person or not. Considered as the quality of a person, it consists in the habit of this reasonable moderation, in its having become the customary and usual disposition of the mind. *Adam Smith's Moral Sentiments, p.* 479.

Aristotle's view of Happiness.

His fundamental notion is, that happiness consists in virtuous energies—that it is not mere pleasure from the possession of an object congruous to our desires. That is good only in a very subordinate sense, which simply ministers to enjoyment. The chief good must be something pursued exclusively for its own sake, and never for the sake of anything else; it can never be used as an instrument; it must be perfect and self-sufficient. What, then, is the highest good of man? To answer this question, says Aristotle, we must understand the proper business of man, as man. As there is a work which pertains to the musician, the statuary, the artist, which constitutes the good or end of his profession, so there must be some work which belongs to man, not as an individual, not as found in such and such circumstances and relations, but belongs to him absolutely as man. Now, what is this? It must be something which springs from the peculiarities of his nature, and which he cannot share with the lower orders of being. It cannot, therefore, be life,—for plants have that; neither can it be the pleasures of sensitive existence, for brutes have them. It must be sought in the life of a being possessed of reason; and as that can be contemplated in a two-fold aspect, either as a state, or as an exercise; as the possession of faculties, or the putting forth of their activities; we must pitch upon the most important, which is activity or energy, or as he also styles it, obedience to reason. Energy, therefore, according to reason, is characteristic of man. This is his business, and he who pursues it best, is the best man,

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Human good, or the good of man as man, is consequently energy according to the best and most perfect virtue. *Thornwell's Discourses upon Truth, p.* 27.

(5.) System of the Epicureans.

The fundamental principle of the Epicurean system was, that bodily pleasure and pain were the sole ultimate objects of desire and aversion. These were desired and shunned on their own account; everything else from its tendency to procure the one of these or to save us from the other. *Power*, (for example,) *riches*, *reputation*, even the *virtues* themselves, were not desirable for their own sake, but were valuable merely as being instrumental to procure us the objects of our natural desires. "They who place the *sovereign good* in *virtue* alone, and who, dazzled by words, overlook the intentions of nature, will be delivered from this greatest of all errors if they will only listen to Epicurus. As to these rare and excellent qualities on which you set so high a value, who is there that would consider them as objects either of praise or of imitation, unless from a belief that they are instrumental in adding to the sum of our pleasures? For as we prize the medical art, not on its own account, but as subservient to the preservation of health, and the art of the pilot, not for the skill he displays, but as it diminishes the dangers of navigation, so also *wisdom*, which is the art of living, would be coveted by none if it were altogether unprofitable, whereas, now, it is an object of general pursuit, from a persuasion that it both guides us to our best enjoyments, and points out to us the most effectual means for their attainment." *Cic. de finibus, p.* 13.

All the pleasures and pains of the *mind* (according to Epicurus) are derived from the recollection and anticipation of *bodily* pleasures and pains; but this recollection and anticipation he considered as contributing much more to our hap-

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piness or misery on the whole, than the pleasures and pains themselves. His philosophy was indeed directed chiefly to inculcate this truth, and to withdraw our solicitude from the pleasures and pains themselves which are not in our power, to the regulation of our recollections and anticipations, which depend upon ourselves. He placed happiness, therefore, in ease of body and tranquility of mind, but much more in the latter than in the former, insomuch that he affirmed a wise man might be happy in the midst of bodily torments.

The system of Epicurus, however, (although it places morality on a wrong foundation, and employs a language with respect to happiness very liable to abuse,—a language which, (as Cicero remarks "savours of nothing magnificent, "nothing generous,") bears at least very honorable testimony to the tendency of the virtues to promote happiness even in *this* life, since he imagined it was from *this* tendency they derived all their value. And accordingly, Mr. Smith remarks, that Cicero, the great enemy of the Epicurean system, borrows from it his most agreeable proofs, that virtue alone is sufficient to secure happiness. And Seneca, though a Stoic, the sect most opposite to that of Epicurus, yet quotes this philosopher more frequently than any other." *Stewart's Active and Moral Powers.*

(6.) System of the Stoics.

In opposition to the Epicurean doctrines already stated on the subject of happiness, the stoics placed the supreme good in rectitude of conduct, without any regard to the event. They did not, however, as has been often supposed, recommend an indifference to external objects, or a life of inactivity and apathy. On the contrary, they taught that nature pointed out to us certain objects of choice and of rejection, and amongst these some to be *more* chosen and avoided than others; and that virtue consisted in choosing and rejecting

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objects according to their intrinsic value. They admitted that health was to be preferred to sickness, riches to poverty; the prosperity of our family, of our friends, of our country, to their adversity; and they allowed, nay, they recommended, the most strenuous exertions to accomplish these desirable ends. They only contended these objects should be pursued not as the constituents of our happiness, but because we believe it to be agreeable to nature that we should pursue them; and that, therefore, when we have done our utmost, we should regard the event as indifferent.

We may observe farther, in favor of this noble system, that the scale of desirable objects which it exhibited was peculiarly calculated to encourage the social virtues. It represented indeed (in common with the theory of Epicurus) *self-love* as the great spring of human actions; but in the application of this erroneous principle to practice, its doctrines were favorable to the most enlarged, nay, to the most disinterested benevolence. It taught that the prosperity of *two* was preferable to that of *one;* that of a city to that of a family; and that of our country to all partial considerations. It was upon this very principle, added to a sublime sentiment of piety, that it founded its chief argument for an entire resignation to the dispensations of Providence. As all events are ordered by perfect wisdom and goodness, the stoics concluded, that whatever happens is calculated to produce the greatest good possible to the universe in general. As it is agreeable to nature, therefore, that we should prefer the happiness of many to a few, and of all to that of many, they concluded that every event which happens is precisely that which we ourselves would have desired, if we had been acquainted with the whole scheme of the Divine administration. *Stewart's Active and Moral Powers.*

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(7.) Contests of the various Schools of Philosophy in Rome.

There is no scene in history so memorable as that in which Cæsar mastered a nobility of which Lucullus and Hortensius, Sulpicius and Catulus, Pompey and Cicero, Brutus and Cato, were members. This renowned body had, from the time of Scipio, sought the Greek philosophy as an amusement or an ornament. Some few, "in thought more elevate," caught the love of truth, and were ambitious of discovering a solid foundation for the Rule of Life. The influence of the Grecian systems was tried by their effect on a body of men of the utmost originality, energy, and variety of character, during the five centuries between Carneades and Constantine, in their successive positions of rulers of the world, and of slaves under the best and under the worst of uncontrolled masters. If we had found this influence perfectly uniform, we should have justly suspected our own love of system of having in part bestowed that appearance on it. Had there been no trace of such an influence discoverable in so great an experiment, we must have acquiesced in the paradox, that opinion does not at all affect conduct. The result is the more satisfactory, because it appears to illustrate general tendency without excluding very remarkable exceptions. Though Cassius was an Epicurean, the true representative of that school was the accomplished, prudent, friendly, good-natured time-server Atticus, the pliant slave of every tyrant, who could kiss the hand of Antony, imbrued as it was in the blood of Cicero. The pure school of Plato sent forth Marcus Brutus, the signal of humanity of whose life was both necessary and sufficient to prove that his daring breach of venerable rules flowed only from that dire necessity which left no other means of upholding the most sacred principles. The Roman orator, though in speculative questions he embraced that mitigated doubt which allowed most ease and freedom to his genius, yet

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in those moral writings where his heart was most deeply interested, followed the severest sect of philosophy, and became almost a Stoic. If any conclusion may be hazarded from this trial of systems, the greatest which history has recorded, we must not refuse our decided, though not undistinguishing preference to that noble school which preserved great souls untainted at the court of dissolute and ferocious tyrants; which exalted the slave of one of Nero's courtiers to be a moral teacher of aftertimes; which, for the first, and hitherto for the only time, breathed philosophy and justice into those rules of law which govern the ordinary concerns of every man; and which, above all, has contributed, by the examples of Marcus Porcius Cato, and of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, to raise the dignity of our species, to keep alive a more ancient love of virtue, and a more lawful sense of duty, throughout all generations. *Mackintosh's Ethical Diss.*

(8.) Opinions of Anselm.

The highest good objectively considered, was, according to Anselm, *God;* the highest subjectively belonging to man was *the knowledge and love of God.* The ground of this doctrine he found in Human *Reason*, by means of which we learned to distinguish and to love the good above the evil, the higher above the lower, and the highest above all other good whatsoever. This love to God was infinite and eternal, because God is infinite and eternal, and on account of this love he concluded that the soul was *eternal.* In this love he found all the springs of happiness. This *rational* view of virtue he afterwards connects with notions of free-will. *Rectitude of will*, or that condition of will by virtue of which man wills what he ought, is identical with virtue, a mere rectitude of knowledge will not do, nor a rectitude of action; the one is presupposed and the other accompanies, but the essence of both consist in willing what we ought, and only because we ought. *Staundlin's Geschichte der. M. Ph.*

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(9.) OCKHAM'S OPINION OF THE FOUNDATION OF MORALITY.

William of Ockham, the most justly celebrated of English schoolmen, went so far beyond this inclination of his master, (Duns Scotus,) as to affirm, that, "if God had commanded his creatures to hate himself, the hatred of God would ever be the duty of man;" a monstrous hyperbole, into which he was perhaps betrayed by his denial of the doctrine of general ideas, the pre-existence of which in the Eternal intellect was commonly regarded as the foundation of the immutable nature of morality. The doctrine of Ockham, which by necessary implication refuses moral attributes to the Deity, and contradicts the existence of a moral government, is practically equivalent to Atheism. *Mackintosh's Ethical Diss.*

(10.) NOMINALISM AND REALISM.

Hand in hand with the whole development of Scholasticism, there was developed the opposition between Nominalism and Realism, an opposition whose origin is to be found in the relation of Scholasticism to the Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy. The Nominalists were those who held that the conceptions of the universal (the *universalia*) were simple names, *flatus vocis* (representations without content and without reality. According to them there are no universal conceptions, no species, no class; everything which, exists only as separate in its pure individuality; there is, therefore, no pure thinking, but only a representation and sensuous perception. The Realists, on the other hand, taking pattern from Plato, held fast to the objective reality of the universals (*universalia ante rem.*) These opposite directions appeared first between *Roscellinus*, who took the side of Nominalism, and *Anselm*, who advocated the Realistic theory, and it is seen from this time through the whole period of Scholasticism, though from the age of *Abelard* (born 1079) a middle view, which was both Nominalistic and Realistic, held with some

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slight modifications the prominent place (*universalia in re.*) According to this view the universal is only something thought and represented, though as such it is not simply a product of the representing consciousness, but has also its objective reality in objects themselves, from which it was argued we could not abstract it if it were not essentially contained in them. This identity of thought and being, is the fundamental premise on which the whole dialectic course of the Scholastics rests. All their arguments are founded on the claim, that that which has been syllogistically proved is in reality the same as in logical thinking. If this premise is overthrown, so falls with it the whole basis of Scholasticism; and there remains nothing more for the thinker to do, who has gone astray in his objectivity, but to fall back upon himself. This self-dissolution of Scholasticism actually appears with *William of Ockham* (died 1347,) the most influential reviver of that Nominalism, but which had been so mighty in the beginning of Scholasticism, but which now, more victorious against a decaying than then against a rising form of culture, plucked away its foundation from the framework of Scholastic dogmatism, and brought the whole structure into inevitable ruin. *Schwegler's History of Philosophy.*

(11.) Ethical Doctrines of Hugo Grotius.

That he may lay down the fundamental principles of Ethics, he introduces Carneades on the stage as denying altogether the reality of moral distinctions; teaching that law and morality are contrived by powerful men for their own interest; that they vary in different countries, and change in successive ages; that there can be no natural law, since nature leads men as well as other animals to prefer their own interest to every other object; that therefore there is either no justice, or if there be, it is another name for the height of folly, inasmuch as it is a fond attempt to persuade a human

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being to injure himself for the unnatural purpose of benefitting his fellowmen.

To this Grotius answered, that even inferior animals under the powerful, though transient impulse of parental love, prefer their young to their own safety or life; that gleams of compassion, and, he might have added, of gratitude and indignation, appear in the human infant long before the age of moral discipline: that man at the period of maturity is a social animal, who delights in the society of his fellow-creatures for its own sake, independently of the help and accommodation which it yields; that he is a reasonable being, capable of framing and pursuing general rules of conduct, of which he discerns that the observance contributes to a regular, quiet, and happy intercourse between all the members of the community; and that from these considerations all the precepts of morality, and all the commands and prohibitions of just law, may be derived by impartial reason. "And these principles," says the pious philosopher, "would have their weight, even if it were to be granted (which could not be conceded without the highest impiety) that there is no God, or that he exercises no moral government over human affairs." "Natural law is the dictate of right reason, pronouncing that there is in some actions a moral obligation, and in other actions a moral deformity, arising from their respective suitableness or repugnance to the reasonable and social nature; and that consequently such acts are either forbidden or enjoined by God, the author of nature. Actions which are the subject of this execution of reason, are in themselves lawful or unlawful, and are therefore as such necessarily commanded or prohibited by God." *Mackintosh's Ethical Diss.*, *p.* 102.

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(12.) JEREMY TAYLOR'S VIEW OF CONSCIENCE.

So that it was well said of St. Bernard, *Conscientia candor est lucis æternæ, et speculum sine macula Dei Majestatis, et imago bonitatis illius:* 'Conscience is the brightness and splendour of the eternal light, a spotless mirror of the Divine Majesty, and the image of the goodness of God.' It is higher which Tatianus said of conscience, Μόνον εἶναι συνείδησιν θεὸν—"Conscience is God unto us, which saying he had from Menander:"

Βροτοῖς ἅπασι συνείδησις Θεός,

and it had in it this truth, that God, who is everywhere in several manners, hath the appellative of his own attributes and effects in the several manners of his presence.

"Jupiter est quodcunque vides, quocunque moveris."

"That Providence" he adds, "which governs all the world, is nothing else but God present by his providence, and God is in our hearts by his laws; he rules us by his substitute, our conscience." He then proceeds to illustrate this in his own way: "God sits there, and gives us laws; and, as God said to Moses, I have made thee a God to Pharoah, that is to give him laws, and to minister in the execution of these laws, and to inflict angry sentences upon him, so hath God done to us, to give us laws, and to exact obedience to those laws; to punish them that prevaricate, and to reward the obedient.—And therefore conscience is called οἰκεῖος Φύλαξ, ἔνοικος Θεὸς ἐπίτροπος δαίμων, the household guardian, the domestic God, the spirit or angel of the place."—*Rule of Conscience.*

(13.) HOBBES' VIEW OF VIRTUE AND VICE.

Every man by natural passion, calleth that good which pleaseth him for the present, or so far forth as he can foresee; and in like manner, that which displeaseth him, evil. And therefore he that foreseeth the whole way to his preservation, which is the end that every one by nature aimeth at, must

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also call it good, and the contrary evil. And this is that good and evil, which not every man in passion calleth so, but all men by reason. And therefore the fulfilling of all these laws is good in reason, and the breaking of them evil. And so also the habit, or disposition, or intention to fulfil them good; and the neglect of them evil. And from hence cometh that distinction of *malum pœnæ*, and *malum culpæ:* for *malum pœnæ* is any pain or molestation of the mind whatsoever, but *malum culpæ* is that action which is contrary to reason and the law of nature; as also the habit of doing according to these and other laws of nature, that tend to our preservation, is that we call *virtue;* and the habit of doing the contrary, *vice.* As for example, justice is that habit by which we stand to covenants, injustice the contrary vice; equity that habit by which we allow equality of nature, arrogancy the contrary vice; gratitude the habit whereby we requite the benefit and trust of others, ingratitude the contrary vice; temperance the habit by which we abstain from all things that tend to our destruction, intemperance the contrary vice; prudence, the same with virtue in general. As for the common opinion, that virtue consisteth in mediocrity, and vice in extremes, I see no ground for it, nor can find any such mediocrity. Courage may be virtue, when the daring is extreme, if the cause be good, and extreme fear no vice when the danger is extreme. To give a man more than his due, is no injustice, though it be to give him less: and in gifts it is not the sum that maketh liberality, but the reason. And so in all other virtues and vices. I know that this doctrine of mediocrity is Aristotle's, but his opinions concerning virtue and vice, are no other than those, which were received then, and are still by the generality of men unstudied, and therefore not very likely to be accurate.

The sum of virtue is to be sociable with them that will be sociable, and formidable to them that will not. And the

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same is the sum of the law of nature: for in being sociable, the law of nature taketh place by way of peace and society; and to be formidable, is the law of nature in war, where to be feared is a protection a man hath from his own power: and as the former consisteth in actions of equity and justice, the latter consisteth in actions of honor. And equity, justice, and honor, contain all virtues whatsoever.—*Hobbes' 4 vol. Human Nature.*

(14.) More's Ethical Opinions.

Ethics is, he begins by asserting, the art of living well and happily, *Ars bene beateque vivendi.* And he forthwith proceeds to treat of this happiness, *de Beatitudine.* He soon determines that this beatitude is to be placed in a Boniform Faculty. Of this boniform faculty, the fruit is a happiness or divine love, than which no greater happiness can exist, he ventures to declare, either in the present life or in the future. And this happiness must arise, not from the mere knowledge, but from the sense of virtue, *ex sensu virtutis.*

It becomes obvious, in such expressions, how easy the transition is, from the consideration of virtue as the source of happiness, to virtue as perceived by a peculiar faculty; since, in this view, the happiness, as well as the perception, requires a peculiar faculty for its realization. "If any one," More says, "estimates the fruit of virtue by that imaginary knowledge of virtue which is acquired by definitions alone, it is all one as if he should try to estimate the knowledge of fire from a fire painted on the wall, which has no power whatever to keep off the winter's cold." "Every vital good," he adds, "is perceived and judged of by a life and a sense. Virtue is an intimate life, not an eternal form, nor a thing visible to outward eyes." And he quotes from one of his favorites, the Neoplatonists, "If thou *art* this, thou hast *seen* this."—*Whewell's History of Moral Philosophy.*

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(15.) Clark's Moral Doctrine.

The sum of his moral doctrine may be stated as follows. Man can conceive nothing without at the same time conceiving its relations to other things. He must ascribe the same law of perception to every being to whom he ascribes thought. He cannot therefore doubt that all the relations of all things to all must have always been present to the Eternal Mind. The relations in this sense are eternal, however recent the things may be between which they subsist. The whole of these relations constitute truth. The knowledge of them is omniscience. These eternal *different* relations of things involve a consequent eternal *fitness* or *unfitness* in the application of things one to another; with a regard to which, the will of God always chooses, and which ought likewise to determine the wills of all subordinate rational beings. These eternal differences make it fit and reasonable for the creatures so to act; they cause it to be their duty, or lay an *obligation* on them so to do, separate from the will of God, and antecedent to any prospect of advantage or reward. Nay, wilful wickedness is the same absurdity and insolence in morals, as it would be in natural things to pretend to alter the relations of numbers, or to take away the properties of mathematical figures. "Morality," says one of his most ingenious scholars, "is the practice of reason."—*Mackintosh's Eth. Diss.*

(16.) Theory of Mandeville.

The great object of Mandeville's inquiry into the origin of moral virtue, is to show that all our moral sentiments are derived from education, and are the workmanship of politicians and lawgivers.

It appears from the passage formerly quoted, that the engine which Mandeville supposes politicians to employ for the purpose of creating the artificial distinction between virtue and vice is *vanity* or *pride*, which two words he uses as

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synonymous. He employs them likewise in a much more extensive sense than their common acceptation authorizes; to denote, not only an overweening conceit of our own character and attainments, or a weak and childish passion for the admiration of others, but that reasonable desire for the esteem of our fellow-creatures which, so far from being a weakness, is a laudable and respectable principle.

From the principle of *vaniiy*, Mandeville endeavours to account for all the instances of self-denial that have occurred in the world. But he is not satisfied with explaining away in this manner the reality of moral distinctions. He endeavours to show that human life is nothing but a scene of hypocrisy, and that there is really little or none of that self-denial to be found that some men lay claim to. In his theory of moral virtue he seems to allow that education may not only teach a man to check his appetites in order to procure the esteem of others, but that it may teach him to consider such a conquest over the lower principles of his nature as noble in itself, and as elevating him still further than nature had done above the level of the brutes. "Those men" (says he) "who have laboured to establish societies endeavoured, in the first place, to insinuate themselves into the hearts of men by flattery, extolling the excellencies of our nature above other animals. They next began to instruct them in the notions of honour and shame, representing the one as the worst of all evils, and the other as the highest good to which mortals could aspire;—which being done, they laid before them how unbecoming it was the dignity of such sublime creatures to be solicitous about gratifying those appetites which they had in common with the brutes, and at the same time unmindful of those higher qualities that gave them the pre-eminence over all the visible beings. They, indeed, confessed that these impulses of nature were very pressing; that it was troublesome to resist, and very difficult wholly to subdue them. But this

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they only used as an argument to demonstrate how glorious the conquest of them was on the one hand, and how scandalous on the other, not to attempt it."—*Stewart's Act. and Moral Powers.*

(17.) SUMMARY OF MALEBRANCHE'S SYSTEM.

"There is," says he, "one parent virtue, the universal virtue, the virtue which renders us just and perfect, the virtue which will one day render us happy. It is the only virtue. It is the love of the universal order, as it eternally existed in the Divine reason, where every created reason contemplates it. This order is composed of practical as well as speculative truth. Reason perceives the moral superiority of one being over another, as immediately as the equality of the radii of the same circle. The relative perfection of beings is that part of the immovable order to which men must conform their minds and their conduct. The love of order is the whole of virtue, and conformity to order constitutes the morality of actions." It is not difficult to discover, that in spite of the singular skill employed in weaving this web, it answers no other purpose than that of hiding the whole difficulty. The love of universal order, says Malebranche, requires that we should value an animal more than a stone, because it is more valuable; and love God infinitely more than man, because he is infinitely better. But without *presupposing* the reality of moral distinctions, and the power of moral feelings, the two points to be proved, how can either of these propositions be evident, or even intelligible? To say that a love of the eternal order will produce the love and practice of every virtue, is an assertion untenable unless we take morality for granted, and useless if we do.

In his work on Morals, all the incidental and secondary remarks are equally well considered and well expressed. The manner in which he applied his principle to the particulars

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of human duty, is excellent. He is, perhaps, the first philosopher who has precisely laid down and rigidly adhered to the great principle, *that virtue consists in pure intentions and dispositions of mind*, without which, actions, however conformable to rules, are not truly moral; a truth of the highest importance, which, in the theological form, may be said to have been the main principle of the first Protestant Reformers.—*Mackintosh's Eth. Diss., p.* 179.

(18.) HUTCHESON'S VIEWS OF A MORAL SENSE.

A late very distinguished writer, Dr. Hutcheson, deduces our moral ideas from a *moral sense*: meaning by this *sense*, a power within us, different from reason, which renders certain actions pleasing and others displeasing to us. As we are so made, that certain impressions on our bodily organs shall excite certain ideas in our minds, and that certain outward forms, when presented to us, shall be the necessary occasions of pleasure or pain. In like manner, according to Dr Hutcheson, we are so made, that certain affections and actions of moral agents shall be the necessary occasions of agreeable or disagreeable sensations in us, and procure our love or dislike of them. He has indeed well shewn, that we have a faculty determining us *immediately* to approve or disapprove actions, abstracted from all views of private advantage; and that the highest pleasures of life depend upon this faculty. Had he proceeded no farther, and intended nothing more by the *moral sense*, than our *moral faculty* in general, little room would have been left for any objections: But then he would have meant by it nothing *new*, and he could not have been considered as the *discoverer* of it. From the term *sense*, which he applies to it, from his rejection of all the arguments that have been used to prove it to be an intellectual power, and from the whole of his language on this subject; it is evident, he considered it as the effect of a *positive constitution* of our

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minds, or as an *implanted* and *arbitrary* principle by which a *relish* is given us for certain moral objects and forms and aversions to others, similar to the relishes and aversions created by any of our other senses. In other words, our ideas of morality, if this account is right, have the same origin with our ideas of the sensible qualities of bodies, the harmony of sounds, of the beauties of painting or sculpture; that is, the mere good pleasure of our Maker adapting the mind and its organs in a particular manner to certain objects. Virtue (as those who embrace this scheme say) is an affair of taste. Moral right and wrong, signify nothing *in the objects themselves* to which they are applied, any more than agreeable and harsh, sweet and bitter; pleasant and painful; but only *certain effects in us.* Our perception of *right*, or moral good, in actions, is that agreeable *emotion*, or feeling, which certain actions produce in us; and of *wrong*, or moral evil, the contrary. They are particular modifications of our minds, or impressions which they are made to receive from the contemplation of certain actions, which the contrary actions *might* have occasioned, had the Author of nature so pleased; and which to suppose to belong to these actions themselves, is as absurd as to ascribe the pleasure or uneasiness, which the observation of a particular form gives us, to the form itself. 'Tis therefore, by this account, improper to say of an action, that it *is right*, in much the same sense that it is improper to say of an object of taste, that it is *sweet;* or of *pain*, that it is *in* fire.—*Price on Morals, p.* 8.

(19.) HUME'S REFERENCE OF MORAL INSTRUCTIONS TO A SENSE.

Thus the course of the argument leads us to conclude, that since vice and virtue are not discoverable merely by reason, or the comparison of ideas, it must be by means of some impression or sentiment they occasion, that we are able to mark the difference betwixt them. Our decisions concerning moral

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rectitude and depravity are evidently perceptions; and as all perceptions are either impressions or ideas, the exclusion of the one is a convincing argument for the other. Morality, therefore, is more properly felt than judged of; though this feeling or sentiment is commonly so soft and gentle that we are apt to confound it with an idea, according to our common custom of taking all things for the same which have any near resemblance to each other.

Now, since the distinguishing impressions by which moral good or evil is known, are nothing but *particular* pains or pleasures, it follows, that in all inquiries concerning these moral distinctions, it will be sufficient to show the principles which make us feel a satisfaction or uneasiness from the survey of any character, in order to satisfy us why the character is laudable or blameable. An action, or sentiment, or character, is virtuous or vicious; why? because its view causes a pleasure or uneasiness of a particular kind. In giving a reason, therefore, for the pleasure or uneasiness, we sufficiently explain the vice or virtue. To have the sense of virtue, is nothing but to *feel* a satisfaction of a particular kind from the contemplation of a character. The very *feeling* constitutes our praise or admiration. We go no farther; nor do we inquire into the cause of the satisfaction. We do not infer a character to be virtuous, because it pleases; but in feeling that it pleases after such a particular manner, we in effect feel that it is virtuous. The case is the same as in our judgments concerning all kinds of beauty, and tastes, and sensations. Our approbation is implied in the immediate pleasure they convey to us.—*Hume's Works, vol.* 2, *p.* 236.

(20.) SKETCH OF ADAM SMITH'S MORAL SYSTEM.

That mankind are so constituted as to sympathize with each other's feelings, and to feel pleasure in the accordance of these feelings, are the only facts required by Dr. Smith, and they

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certainly must be granted to him. To adopt the feelings of another, is to *approve* them. When the sentiments of another are such as would be excited in us by the same objects, we approve them as *morally proper*. To obtain this accord, it becomes necessary for him who enjoys or suffers, to lower his expression of feeling to the point to which the bystanders can raise his fellow-feelings; on which are founded all the high virtues of self-denial and self-command; and it is equally necessary for the bystander to raise his sympathy as near as he can to the level of the original feeling. In all unsocial passions, such as anger, we have a *divided sympathy* between him who feels them and those who are the objects of them. Hence the propriety of extremely moderating them. Pure malice is always to be concealed or disguised, because all *sympathy* is arrayed against it. In the private passions, where there is only a *simple sympathy*—that with the original passion—the expression has more liberty. The benevolent affections, where there is a *double sympathy*—with those who feel them, and those who are their objects—are the most agreeable, and may be indulged with the least apprehensions of finding no echo in other breasts. Sympathy with the gratitude of those who are benefited by good actions, prompts us to consider them as deserving of reward, and forms the *sense of merit;* as fellow-feeling with the resentment of those who are injured by crimes leads us to look on them as worthy of punishment, and constitutes the *sense of demerit.* These sentiments require not only beneficial actions, but benevolent motives for them; being compounded, in the case of merit, of a direct sympathy with the good disposition of the benefactor, and an indirect sympathy with the persons benefited; in the opposite case, with precisely opposite sympathies. He who does an act of wrong to another to gratify his own passions, must not expect that the spectators, who have none of his undue partiality to his own interest, will enter into his

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feelings. In such a case, he knows that they will pity the person wronged, and be full of indignation against him. When he is cooled, he adopts the sentiments of others on his own crime, feels *shame* at the *impropriety* of his former passion, pity for those who have suffered by him, and a dread of punishment from general and just resentment. Such are the constituent parts of remorse.

Our moral sentiments respecting *ourselves* arise from those which others feel concerning us. We feel a self-approbation whenever we believe that the general feeling of mankind coincides with that state of mind in which we ourselves were at a given time. "We suppose ourselves the spectators of our own behaviour, and endeavor to imagine what effect it would in this light produce in us." We must view our own conduct with the eyes of others before we can judge it. The sense of duty arises from putting ourselves in the place of others, and adopting their sentiments respecting our own conduct. In utter solitude there could have been no self-approbation. The *rules* of morality are a summary of those sentiments; and often beneficially stand in their stead when the self-delusions of passion would otherwise hide from us the non-conformity of our state of mind with that which, in the circumstances, can be entered into and approved by impartial bystanders. It is hence that we learn to raise our mind above local or temporary clamor, and to fix our eyes on the surest indications of the general and lasting sentiments of human nature. "When we approve of any character or action, our sentiments are derived from four sources; *first*, we sympathize with the motives of the agent; *secondly*, we enter into the gratitude of those who have been benefitted by his actions; *thirdly*, we observe that his conduct has been agreeable to the general rules by which those two sympathies generally act; and, last of all, when we consider such actions as forming part of a system of behavior which tends to promote the happiness either of

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the individual or of society, they appear to derive a beauty from this utility, not unlike that which we ascribe to any well-contrived machine."—*Mackintosh's Eth. Diss., p.* 234.

(21.) GAY UPON THE CONNECTION OF HAPPINESS WITH THE LOVE OF GOD.

He says: "Now it is evident from the Nature of God, viz. his being infinitely happy in himself from all eternity, and from his goodnes manifested in his works, that he could have no other design in creating mankind than their happiness; and therefore, the means of their happiness: therefore, that my behavior, as far as it may be a means of the happiness of mankind, should be such. Here then we get one step further, or to a new criterion: not to a new criterion of Virtue immediately, but to a criterion of the Will of God. For it is an answer to the enquiry, How shall I know what the Will of God in this particular is? Thus the Will of God is the immediate criterion of Virtue, and the happiness of mankind the criterion of the Will of God; and therefore the happiness of mankind may be said to be the criterion of Virtue, but *once* removed."

"As therefore happiness is the general end of all actions, so each particular action may be said to have its proper and peculiar end. Thus the end of a beau is to please by his dress; the end of study, knowledge. But neither pleasing by dress, nor knowledge, are ultimate ends; they still tend, or ought to tend, to something farther, as is evident from hence, viz. that a man may ask and expect a reason why either of them are pursued. Now to ask the *reason* of any action or pursuit, is only to enquire into the *end* of it: but expect a reason, *i. e.* an end, to be assigned for an *ultimate* end, is absurd. To ask why I pursue happiness, will admit of no other answer than an explanation of the terms."

Gay's definition of Virtue is wider than Paley's: "Virtue

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is the conformity to a rule of life, directing the actions of all rational creatures with respect to each other's happiness; to which conformity every one in all cases is obliged: and every one that does so conform, is, or ought to be approved of, esteemed, and loved for so doing."

(22.) (1.) PALEY'S OPINIONS OF HAPPINESS.

In strictness, any condition may be denominated happy, in which the amount or aggregate of pleasure exceeds that of pain; and the degree of happiness depends upon the quantity of this excess.

And the greatest quantity of it ordinarily attainable in human life is what we mean by happiness, when we inquire or pronounce what human happiness consists in.

In which inquiry I will omit much usual declamation on the dignity and capacity of our nature; the superiority of the soul to the body, of the rational to the animal part of our constitution; upon the worthiness, refinement, and delicacy of some satisfactions, or the meanness, grossness, and sensuality of others; because I hold that pleasures differ in nothing but in continuance and intensity: from a just computation of which, confirmed by what we observe of the apparent cheerfulness, tranquility, and contentment, of men of different tastes, tempers, stations, and pursuits, every question concerning human happiness must receive its decision.

(2.) PALEY'S OPINION OF VIRTUE.

Virtue is "*the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness.*"

According to which definition, "the good of mankind," is the subject; the "will of God," the rule; and "everlasting happiness," the motive, of human virtue.

Virtue has been divided by some moralists into *benevolence*, *prudence*, *fortitude*, and *temperance*. *Benevolence* proposes

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good ends; *prudence* suggests the best means of attaining them; *fortitude* enables us to encounter the difficulties, dangers, and discouragements, which stand in our way in pursuit of these ends; *temperance* repels and overcomes the passions that obstruct it. *Benevolence*, for instance, prompts us to undertake the cause of an oppressed orphan; *prudence* suggests the best means of going about it; *fortitude* enables us to confront the danger, and bear up against the loss, disgrace, or repulse, that may attend our undertaking; and *temperance* keeps under the love of money, of ease, or amusement, which might divert us from it.

Virtue is distinguished by others into two branches only, *prudence* and *benevolence; prudence*, attentive to our own interest; *benevolence*, to that of our fellow creatures; both directed to the same end, the increase of happiness in nature; and taking equal concern in the future as in the present.

The four Cardinal virtues are *prudence*, *fortitude*, *temperance*, and *justice*.

But the division of virtue, to which we are in modern times most accustomed, is into duties:

Toward *God;* as piety, reverence, resignation, gratitude, &c.

Toward *other men*, (or relative duties;) as justice, charity, fidelity, loyalty, &c.

Toward *ourselves;* as chastity, sobriety, temperance, preservation of life, care of health, &c.

More of these distinctions have been proposed, which it is not worth while to set down.

(3.) Paley's Opinion of Utility.

So then actions are to be estimated by their tendency. Whatever is expedient is right. It is the utility of any moral rule alone, which constitutes the obligation of it.

But to all this there seems a plain objection, *viz.* that many actions are useful, which no man in his senses will allow

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to be right. There are occasions in which the hand of the assassin would be very useful. The present possessor of some great estate employs his influence and fortune, to annoy, corrupt, or oppress all about him. His estate would devolve, by his death, to a successor of an opposite character. It is useful, therefore, to dispatch such a one as soon as possible out of the way; as the neighborhood will exchange thereby a pernicious tyrant for a wise and generous benefactor. It might be useful to rob a miser, and give the money to the poor, as the money, no doubt, would produce more happiness by being laid out in food and clothing for half a dozen distressed families, than by continuing locked up in a miser's chest. It may be useful to get possession of a place, a piece of preferment, or of a seat in Parliament, by bribery or false swearing: as by means of them we may serve the public more effectually than in our private station. What then shall we say? Must we admit these actions to be right, which would be to justify assassination, plunder, and perjury; or must we give up our principle, that the criterion of right is utility?

It is not necessary to do either.

The true answer is this; that these actions, after all, are not useful, and for that reason, and that alone, are not right.

To see this point perfectly, it must be observed, that the bad consequences of actions are twofold, *particular* and *general*.

The particular bad consequence of an action is the mischief which that simple action directly and immediately occasions.

The general bad consequence is the violation of some necessary or useful *general* rule.

Thus, the particular bad consequence of the assassination above described is the fright and pain which the deceased underwent; the loss he suffered of life, which is as valuable to a bad man as to a good one, or more so; the prejudice and affliction of which his death was the occasion, to his family, friends, and dependents.

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PART II.

CRITICISM OF THEORIES OF MORALS.

[This portion of the subject being fully discussed in the course of lectures, for the most part without the aid of authoritative quotations, the compiler refers the Student to the the following extracts only.]

(23.) BISHOP BUTLER'S PROOF OF THE EXISTENCE OF A PRINCIPLE OF BENEVOLENCE, BESIDES THAT OF SELF-LOVE.

First, There is a natural principle of *benevolence* in man which is in some degree to *society*, what *self-love* is to the *individual*. And if there be in mankind any disposition to friendship; if there be any such thing as compassion, for compassion is momentary love; if there be any such thing as the paternal or filial affections; if there be any affection in human nature, the object and end of which is the good of another; this is itself benevolence, or the love of another. Be it ever so short, be it ever so low a degree, or ever so unhappily confined; it proves the assertion, and points out what we were designed for, as really as though it were in a higher degree and more extensive. I must, however, remind you, that though benevolence and self-love are different; though the former tends most directly to public good, and the latter to private; yet they are so perfectly coincident, that the greatest satisfactions to ourselves depend upon our having benevolence in a due degree; and that self-love is one chief security of our right behavior towards society. It may be added that their mutual coinciding, so that we can scarce promote one without the other, is equally a proof that we were made for both. 1*st Sermon upon Human Nature*, *p.* 3.

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Second, Self-love and interestedness was stated to consist in or be an affection to ourselves, a regard to our own private good: it is, therefore, distinct from benevolence, which is an affection to the good of our fellow-creatures. But that benevolence is distinct from, that is, not the same thing with self-love, is no reason for its being looked upon with any peculiar suspicion, because every principle whatever, by means of which self-love is gratified, is distinct from it. And all things, which are distinct from each other, are equally so. A man has an affection or aversion to another: that one of these tends to, and is gratified by doing good, that the other tends to, and is gratified by doing harm, does not in the least alter the respect which either one or the other of these inward feelings has to self-love. We use the word *property* so as to exclude any other persons having an interest in that, of which we say a particular man has the property: and we often use the word *selfish* so as to exclude in the same manner all regards to the good of others. But the cases are not parallel: for though that exclusion is really part of the idea of property, yet such positive exclusion, or bringing this peculiar disregard to the good of others into the idea of self-love, is in reality adding to the idea, or changing it from what it was before stated, to consist in, namely, in an affection to ourselves. This being the whole idea of self-love, it can no otherwise exclude good-will or love of others, than merely by not including it, no otherwise than it excludes love of arts, or reputation, or of anything else. Neither, on the other hand, does benevolence, any more than love of arts or of reputation, exclude self-love. Love of our neighbor, then, has just the same respect to, is no more distant from self-love, than hatred of our neighbor, or than love and hatred of anything else. Thus the principles, from which men rush upon certain ruin for the destruction of an enemy, and for the preservation of a friend, have the same respect to the private affection, are equally interested, or

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equally disinterested; and it is of no avail, whether they are said to be one or the other. Therefore, to those who are shocked to hear virtue spoken of as disinterested, it may be allowed, that it is indeed absurd to speak thus of it; unless hatred, several particular instances of vice, and all the common affections and aversions in mankind, are acknowledged to be disinterested too. Is there any less inconsistence between the love of inanimate things, or of creatures merely sensitive, and self-love, than between self-love, and the love of our neighbor? Is desire of, and delight in the happiness of another any more a diminution of self-love, than desire of and delight in the esteem of another? They are both equally desire of and delight in somewhat external to ourselves: either both or neither are so. The object of self-love is expressed in the term self: and every appetite of sense, and every particular affection of the heart, are equally interested or disinterested, because the objects of them all are equally self or somewhat else. Whatever ridicule, therefore, the mention of a disinterested principle or action may be supposed to lie open to, must, upon the matter being thus stated, relate to ambition, and every appetite and particular affection, as much as to benevolence. And indeed all the ridicule, and all the grave perplexity, of which this subject hath had its full share, is merely from words. The most intelligible way of speaking of it seems to be this: that self-love, and the actions done in consequence of it, (for these will presently appear to be the same as to this question,) are interested; that particular affections towards external objects, and the actions done in consequence of those affections, are not so. But every one is at liberty to use words as he pleases. All that is here insisted upon is, that ambition, revenge, benevolence, all particular passions whatever, and the actions they produce, are equally interested or disinterested.

Thus it appears, that there is no peculiar contrariety between

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self-love and benevolence; no greater competition between these, than between any other particular affections and self-love. This relates to the affections themselves. Let us now see whether there be any peculiar contrariety between the respective courses of life which these affections lead to; whether there be any greater competition between the pursuit of private and of public good, than between any other particular pursuits and that of private good. *Sermon* 11, *p.* 119 to 121.

(24.) EXTRACTS FROM DR. THORNWELL'S CRITICISM OF PALEY'S SYSTEM OF MORALS.

1. Dr. Thornwell thus condenses the theory:

"From this brief analysis, Dr. Paley's whole theory of morals may be compendiously compressed in a single syllogism. Whatever God commands is right or obligatory. Whatever is expedient God commands. Therefore, whatever is expedient is right. The major proposition rests upon his analysis of moral obligation—the minor upon the proof of the Divine benevolence, and the substance of all is given in his remarkable definition of virtue, which, logically, should have followed the exposition of expediency. "Virtue is the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness." The matter of virtue is expediency, which becomes right or obligatory, because it is commanded by God, and supported by the awful sanctions of the future world.

2. He thus points out the logical fallacy:

"It is in the solution of this inquiry that we encounter the central principle of Dr. Paley's theory. If his reasoning here be conclusive, however we may object to his analysis of obligation, we are shut up to the adoption of his favorite maxim —that whatever is expedient is right. The only argument which he pretends to allege in vindication of this sweeping dogma, is drawn from the benevolence of God; and yet that argument—though I do not know that the blunder has ever been particularly exposed—is a logical fallacy, an illicit process of the minor term. What he had proved in his chapter on Divine benevolence is, that God wills the happiness of His creatures. What he has collected from his analysis of obli-

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gation is, that whatever God wills is right. Put these premises together, and they yield a syllogism in the third figure, from which Dr. Paley's conclusion can by no means be drawn.

Whatever God wills is expedient.

Whatever God wills is right.

Therefore, says Dr. Paley, whatever is expedient is right—an illicit process of the minor term. Therefore, is the true conclusion, *some* things that are expedient are right—the third figure always concluding particularly.

3. He thus shows how this School falsifies the phenomena of our moral nature:

1. If the principles which it postulates are all that are necessary to a moral agent, brutes would be as truly moral agents as men. They are susceptible of pleasure and pain, of hope and fear. They can foresee, to some extent, the consequences of their actions. They can be trained and disciplined to particular qualities and habits. The government which man exercises over them is conducted upon the same principles with which, according to the selfish philosophers, the government of God is administered over man. It exactly answers to Dr. Paley's definition of a *moral* government—except that he restricts it to *reasonable* creatures, without any necessity from the nature of the case—"any dispensation whose object is to influence the conduct of reasonable creatures." A system of intimidation, coaxing and persuasion—a discipline exclusively relying upon hope and fear—this the horse can be subject to that fears the spur—the dog that cringes from a kick—any beast that can be trained by the whip. These animals obey their master from the same motive from which Dr. Paley would have a good man obey his God. Now, is there no peculiarity in our moral emotions but that which arises from hope and fear? Is there nothing that *man* feels, when he acknowledges the authority of law, which the brute does not also feel when he shrinks from the lash or is allured by caresses? Is there not something which the desire of pleasure and the reluctation against pain, as mere physical conditions, are utterly inadequate to explain? We all feel that the brute differs from the man, and differs pre-eminently in this very circumstance, that though capable of being influenced by motives addressed to his hopes and fears, he is incapable of the notion of duty, of crime, or of moral obligation. He is a physical, but not a *moral* agent.

2. This theory, in the next place, contradicts the moral con-

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victions of mankind, in making no distinction betwixt interest and duty, betwixt authority and might. Nothing can be obligatory, according to the articulate confession of Dr. Paley, but what we are to gain or lose by; and the only question I am to ask, in order to determine whether I am bound by the command of another, is whether he can hurt or bless me. His right depends upon his power, and my duty turns upon my weakness and dependence.

If interest is duty, and power is right, natural ties, whether of blood or affection, considerations of justice and humanity, relations, original or adventitious, are all to be discarded, and every moral problem becomes only a frigid calculation of loss and gain. No elements are to be permitted to enter into its solution, which shall disturb the coolness of the mathematical computation. All moral reasoning is reduced to arithmetic, and a man's duty is determined by the sum at the foot of the account.

Now, if there be any two things about which the consciousness of mankind is clear and distinct, it is that there is a marked and radical difference betwixt interest and duty, right and might.

The distinction betwixt right and might, betwixt unjust usurpation and lawful authority, is manifestly something far deeper than the distinction betwixt a lower and a higher interest. It is not the sword which justifies the magistrate—it is the magistrate which justifies the sword.

All men feel that the *right* to *command* is one thing, the *power* to *hurt* another—that there can be no *obligation* to obey, although it may be the dictate of policy, where *force* is is the only basis of authority. The language of all men marks the difference betwixt the usurper and the lawful ruler, the tyrant and the just magistrate; and any system which ignores or explains away this natural and necessary distinction, contradicts the moral phenomena of our nature.

3. The theory of Paley is liable to still further exception, as taking no account of the conviction of good and ill desert and the peculiar emotions which constitute and spring from the consciousness of guilt or accompany the consciousness of right. The slightest attention to the operations of his own mind must satisfy every one that the approbation of virtue and the disapprobation of vice include much more than a simple sensation of pleasure, analogous to that which arises from the congruity of an object to an appetite, affection or desire. It is more than the pleasure which springs from the perception of

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utility or of the fitness of means to accomplish an end It is a *peculiar* emotion—an emotion which we are not likely to confound with any other phenomenon of our nature. It is a feeling that the agent, in a virtuous action, *deserves* to be rewarded, accompanied with the desire to see him rewarded, and the expectation that he will be rewarded. The agent in a vicious action, on the contrary, we feel is deserving of punishment, and we confidently expect that, sooner or later, he will receive his due.

A theory which annihilates the distinction between rewards and favors, between punishment and misfortune, is at war with the fundamental dictates of our nature. It sweeps away that very characteristic by which we are rendered capable of *government*, as distinct from *discipline*. It confounds remorse with simple regret, and the approbation of conscious rectitude with the pleasure which springs from the gratification of any other feeling or desire. It denies, in other words, that in any just and proper sense of the terms we can be denominated moral agents. The very element in the phenomenon which makes a judgment to be moral, is left out or overlooked.

4. But it deserves further to be remarked, that the theory in question, especially as expounded by Dr. Paley, makes no manner of difference, as to their general nature, betwixt the obligation to virtue and a temptation to vice. There is nothing in either case but a strong inducement, derived from appearances of good. A violent motive, we are told, is the genus and the command of a superior, the specific difference of obligation. The violent motive, the genus, is found in temptation; the specific difference is wanting. Hence temptation is clearly a species co-ordinate with duty. The bad man is enticed by his lusts, and yields to those passions which promise him enjoyment—his end is pleasure. The good man is allured by computations which put this same pleasure at the foot of the account. They are consequently governed by the same general motive, and the only difference betwixt them is that the one has a sounder judgment than the other. They have equally obeyed the same law of pleasure, but have formed a different estimate of the pursuits and objects that shall yield the largest amount of gratification. Temptation, accordingly, may be called an obligation to vice, and duty a temptation to virtue. Who does not feel that the difference is more than accidental betwixt these states of the mind; that the motives to virtue and the seductions of sin operate upon principles entirely distinct, and have nothing in common but the circumstance of their appeal to our active nature. They

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are essentially different states of mind, and the theory which co-ordinates them under the same genus prevaricates with consciousness in its clearest manifestations.

5. The last general objection which I shall notice to Dr. Paley's system, is its impracticability. His fundamental principle cannot be employed as the criterion of duty, from the obvious impossibility of estimating the collected consequences of any given action. The theory is that morality depends upon results; the circumstance which determines an action to be right is its being upon the whole productive of more happiness than misery. It must, consequently, be traced in its entire history, through time and eternity, before any moral judgment can be confidently affirmed in regard to it. What human faculties are competent for such calculations? What mind but that of God can declare the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done? The government of God, both natural and moral, is one vast complicated system; the relations of its parts are so multifarious and minute—the connections of events so numerous and hidden—that only the mind which planned the scheme can adequately compass it. He knows nothing of it, as Bishop Butler has remarked, "who is not sensible of his ignorance in it." To be able to estimate all the consequences of any given action is to be master of the entire system of the universe, not merely in the general principles which govern it, but in all the details of every single event. It is to have the knowledge of the Almighty. *Thornwells Review of Paley's Moral Philosophy.*

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PART III.

SPECULATIVE MORALS.

"Going over the theory of Virtue in one's thoughts; talking well and drawing fine pictures of it, this is so far from necessarily or certainly conducing to form a habit of it in him, who thus employs himself, that it may harden the mind in a contrary course, and render it gradually more insensible, *i. e.*, form a habit of insensibility to all moral considerations."—*Butler's Analogy.*

(25.) Definition of Natural Law.

Natural law, in its widest sense, (*lex naturæ*,) is applied to those rules of duty which spring from the nature and constitution of man. There are those who maintain that the distinctions of right and wrong are the arbitrary creatures of positive institutions—"that things honorable, and things just admit of such vast difference and uncertainty, that they seem to exist by statute only, and not in the nature of things." In opposition to this theory, it is maintained that the moral differences of things, are eternal and indestructible, and that the knowledge of them, in their great primordial principles, is an essential part of the original furniture of the mind. Man is a law to himself; from his very make and structure, he is a moral and responsible being, and those rules, which, in the progress and development of his moral faculties, he is led to apprehend as data of conscience, together with the conclusions which legitimately flow from them, are denominated laws of nature. They belong to inherent, essential morality, in contradistinction to what is positive and instituted. The comple-

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ment of these rules is called right reason, practical reason, and by Jeremy Taylor, legislative reason. Hence that of Cicero: "*Est quidem vera lex recta ratio.*" Noble as this passage is, a much greater than *Cicero* has declared that man is a law unto himself, and that those who are destitute of an external communication from heaven, have yet an internal teacher to instruct them in the will of God. The dictates of conscience are denominated laws, from the authority with which they are felt to speak; they are manifested in consciousness as commands, and not as speculative perceptions; they are laws, of nature, because they are founded in the nature of things, and are enounced through the nature of the mind.

In a narrower sense, natural law (*jus naturæ*) denotes the body of rights which belong to man as man, which spring from his constitution as a social and responsible being, and which consequently attach to all men in the same relations and circumstances. In this it coincides with natural jurisprudence, as distinguished from the municipal regulations of States and nations.

In a still narrower sense, natural law is restricted to those principles or rules which should determine the duties of men in times of revolution, or under oppressive and tyrannical governments, or regulate the intercourse of independent States and nations. In none of these senses does natural law coincide precisely with moral philosophy. In the first sense, it may be said that the conclusions of moral philosophy are natural laws; they are the results of its investigations, the end of its inquiries. In the second sense, the view of human nature is too limited for a complete philosophy of the moral constitution. "Right and duty," as Dr. Reid has remarked, "are things different, and have even a kind of opposition; yet they are so related that one cannot even be conceived without the other; and he that understands the one must understand the other." Hence it happens, that although the in-

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quiries of natural jurisprudence begin at a different point from those of the moral philosopher, they eventually traverse the same ground, and meet in the same practical conclusions. Still, natural jurisprudence is only one branch of moral investigations; and it has only been by an unwarrantable extension of its terms, that it has been made to cover almost the entire domain of duties to our fellow men." *Thornwell's Review of Paley's Moral Philosophy.*

(26.) Two Methods of Treating the Subject of Morals.

There are two ways in which the subject of morals may be treated. One begins from inquiring into the abstract relations of things; the other, from a matter of fact, namely, what the particular nature of man is, its several parts, their economy or constitution; from whence it proceeds to determine what course of life it is, which is correspondent to this whole nature. In the former method the conclusion is expressed thus, that vice is contrary to the nature and reasons of things; in the latter, that it is a violation or breaking in upon our own nature. Thus they both lead us to the same thing, our obligations to the practice of virture; and thus they exceedingly strengthen and enforce each other. The first seems the most direct and formal proof, and in some respects the least liable to cavil and dispute: the latter is in a peculiar manner adapted to satisfy a fair mind, and is more easily applicable to the several particular relations and circumstances in life.—*Butler's Preface to Sermons.*

(27.) There is a Principle in Man which we call Conscience.

There is a principle of reflection in men, by which they distinguish between, approve, and disapprove their own actions. We are plainly constituted such sort of creatures as to reflect upon our own nature. The mind can take a view

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of what passes within itself, its propensions, aversions, passions, affections, as respecting such objects, and in such degrees, and of the several actions consequent thereupon. In this survey it approves of one, disapproves of another, and towards a third is affected in neither of these ways, but is quite indifferent. This principle in man, by which he approves or disapproves his heart, temper, and actions, is conscience; for this is the strict sense of the word, though sometimes it is used so as to take in more. And that this faculty tends to restrain men from doing mischief to each other, and leaves them to do good, is too manifest to need being insisted upon. Thus, a parent has the affection of love to his children: this leads him to take care of, to educate, to make due provision for them. The natural affection leads to this; but the reflection that it is his proper business, what belongs to him, that it is right and commendable so to do: this, added to the affection becomes a much more settled principle, and carries him on through more labor and difficulties for the sake of his children, than he would undergo for that affection alone, if he thought it, and the course of action it led to, either indifferent or criminal. This, indeed, is impossible,—to do that which is good, and not to approve of it; for which reason they are frequently not considered as distinct, though they really are: for men often approve of the actions of others, which they will not imitate, and likewise do that which they approve not. It cannot possibly be denied, that there is this principle of reflection or conscience in human nature. Suppose a man to relieve an innocent person in great distress; suppose the same man afterwards, in the fury of anger, to do the greatest mischief to a person who had given no just cause of offence; to aggravate the injury, add the circumstances of former friendship, and obligation from the injured person: let the man who is supposed to have done those two different actions cooly reflect upon them after-

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wards, without regard to their consequences to himself;—to assert that any common man would be affected in the same way towards these different actions, that he would make no distinction between them, but approve or disapprove them equally, is too glaring a falsity to need being confuted.—There is therefore this principle of reflection or conscience in mankind. It is needless to compare the respect it has to private good, with the respect it has to public; since it plainly tends as much to the latter as to the former, and is commonly thought to tend chiefly to the latter. This faculty is now mentioned merely as another part of the inward frame of man, pointing out to us in some degree what we are intended for, and as what will naturally and of course have some influence. The particular place assigned to it by nature, what authority it has, and how great influence it ought to have, shall be hereafter considered. *Butler's Sermon on Human Nature.*

(28.) M'Cosh's Analysis of Conscience—Conscience as a Law.

1. *Conscience may be considered as a law.*—We believe it to be an original, a divinely implanted, and a fundamental law. Still, though persons could succeed in analysing it, it would not the less be a law. Take even the views of Brown and Mackintosh, meagre though they appear to us to be, and suppose that there is nothing else in the mind when contemplating moral actions, but the springing up of emotions, still there must be a heaven-appointed law, otherwise the emotions would not be so invariable. Those who resolve conscience into a mere class of emotions cannot thereby free themselves from assuming the existence of a law, the law according to which the emotions are produced. Those again, who regard it as a faculty must assume a rule, as the basis of its operations. "Upon whatever," says Adam Smith, "we suppose that our moral faculties are founded, whether upon a certain modification of reason, upon an original instinct called a moral sense, or on some other principle of our nature, it cannot be doubted that they are given us for the direction of

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our conduct in this life." "The rules, therefore, which they prescribe are to be regarded as the command and laws of the Deity, promulgated by those vicegerents which he has set up within us."

It was under this aspect that the ancients delighted to contemplate the moral faculty, as in the well-known passage of Cicero,—"right reason is itself a law, congenial to the feelings of nature diffused among all other men, uniform, eternal, calling us imperiously to our duty, and peremptorily prohibiting every violation of it." "Nor does it speak one language at Rome, and another at Athens, varying from place to place, or from time to time; but it addresses itself to all nations and to all ages, deriving its authority from the common sovereign of the universe, and carrying home its sanctions to every breast by the inevitable punishment which it inflicts on transgressors." It is under this same view that it is presented to us by a still higher authority,—"They who have no law (no written law) are a law unto themselves, which shows the law written in their hearts." It is under this same aspect that the profound German metaphysician represents it when he talks of categorical imperative. It is to be regretted that some later ethical writers have very much lost sight of this view of conscience, though perhaps the most important that can be taken.

We have but to pause and seriously reflect for an instant, to discover that great advantages must arise from morality assuming the form of a law. It is in this character that it acquires a clearly defined, a solid and consistent shape, and an authoritative power. As a law, it has its clear precepts its binding obligations, and its solemn sanctions. When it is presented merely as a sentiment, we have an impression as if it might vary with change of circumstances, or with man's varied feelings, and we might be tempted, with Rousseau, to recommend as right whatever our feelings impelled us to. But in acknowledging it as a law, we placed it above everything that is fleeting and variable, and give it an independent, an unchangeable, and eternal authority.

The moral law serves the same purpose, but in an infinitely higher degree in the government of intelligent and responsible beings, as physical law does in regard to inanimate objects and the brute creation. All the Works of God seem to be under law of some kind. The heavens and the earth obey the ordinances of God's appointment, and the lower animals are led by the instincts with which the Creator has endowed

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them. When we ascend the scale of creation, we find that God's intelligent and responsible creatures are still under law, but that law of a higher kind, a moral law summed up in love. This law is the golden chain by which the governor of the universe binds his intelligent creatures to himself and to one another. It is the royal law of love, worthy of God, who is love, and fitted to make those who obey it supremely happy in themselves and in the enjoyment of God. In the observance of that law, God is glorified, and the creature is unspeakably blessed. In the breaking of that law, the God who appointed it is dishonored, and the transgressor lands himself in guilt and misery.

As it is advantageous to put morality on the footing of a law, it is no less beneficial that this law should be written upon the heart. It is difficult to see how it could have any power over any given individual, except by its having a place in the inner man. But does some one suggest that it might be communicated orally, or in writing, to the creature by the Creator? No one, who has seriously reflected on the subject, will deny that much benefit may be derived from the possessions of such a law, spoken or written. But such an outward law does not render an inward principle unnecessary. For the question presses itself upon us, why are we bound to obey this law? It is answered, because it is good?—the farther question is now raised, how do we know it to be good? Or is it answered, that we are bound to obey it, because of the very relation in which we stand to God, we have thereby moved the difficulty but a step back, for the question suggests itself, why are we bound to obey God? We are bound to obey God, solely because of a moral relation; and there must be an internal law to inform us of that relation. It thus appears, that every outward law conducts us to an inward principle, from which it receives its sanction.

Such an internal principle or law written in the heart, if only in healthy exercise, must possess many advantages over a mere written or verbal law. It is quick, ready, and instant. It acts as a constant monitor. It lies at the seat of the will and the affections; and is ready to operate upon both. But while it is in its very nature anterior and superior to an outward law, it may yet be greatly aided by such a law. Those who possess the inward principle, will find consistency and stability imparted to their conduct, by their embodying the dictates of that principle in a code of precepts. It is conceivable, therefore, that the possession of the internal monitor

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may not supersede the development of positive commandments, even among holy intelligences. And when the conscience is perverted, or when it is not in a lively state, it is absolutely necessary, in order to its rectification, that there be an outward law embodying, clearly and correctly, the will of God, and acting the same part as the dial, when it rectifies the disordered time-piece.

Not only is conscience a law, it is, as Butler has shown, the supreme law. Subject only to God, it reviews all the actions of the responsible agent, and is itself reviewed by none. It is the highest judicatory in the human mind, judging all, and being judged of none; admitting of appeal from all, and admitting of no appeal from itself to any other human tribunal. The conscience is a universal arbiter, for all dispositions and voluntary acts pass under its notice. It is immutable, for it pronounces its judgments upon an unchangeable law. It is supreme, for while it submits to none other, it judges of the exercises of all the other faculties and affections of the mind.

2. *The conscience may be considered as a faculty.*—In doing so, we are not viewing it under an aspect inconsistent with that under which we have just been contemplating it. For every quality and every faculty has a rule of operation, which may be described as its law. The conscience, from its nature may be held as embracing within it, in a peculiar manner, a law as the rule of its exercise; and this, as we have seen, a law of a very authoritative character. But while we view it as a law, we are not the less to view it as a faculty, of which this law is but the function or the exponent.

Some later ethical and metaphysical writers, we are aware, have maintained that there is no judgment passed by the mind on moral relations being presented to it. The whole mental process is represented as being one of the emotions, and not of the judgment or reason. And it is at once to be acknowledged, that if we define the reason or understanding as the power or powers which distinguish between the true and the false, or which judge of relations, as of the resemblances and differences of objects, we must place morality altogether beyond its jurisdiction. Perceptions of this kind are in their whole nature different from the perceptions of the difference between right and wrong—between duty and sin. But if it be meant to affirm, that when the voluntary acts of responsible beings pass in review before the mind, it does not pro-

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nounce a judgment or decision, then we cannot but hold the view to be inconsistent with our consciousness, and as far from being well-fitted to furnish a foundation to a proper ethical theory. Just as the mind, on certain purely intellectual propositions being presented to it, says, "this is true," or "this is false;" so we find it on the voluntary actions of intelligent beings being presented to it, declaring, "this is right," or "this is wrong."

The parties who are most inclined to remove morality from the region of the understanding, such as Brown and Mackintosh, are often constrained to speak of the moral faculty, and to talk of its decisions and judgements. The very language which they use, in speaking of the emotions which are supposed by them to constitute the whole mental process—the emotions, as they call them, of moral *approbation and disapprobations*—seems to imply that there must be a judgment of the mind. If approbation and disapprobation are not judgments, we know not what can constitute a judgment of the mind. "We cannot," says Butler, "form a notion of this faculty, without taking in judgment." Nor is it possible to find language expressive of the mental phenomena which does not imply, that along with the emotion, there is a judgment come to, and a decision pronounced; and it would be confounding the different departments of the human mind altogether, to refer such a judgment to our emotional nature, or mere sensibility.

We apprehend a mathematical proposition, and we declare it to be true; here there is acknowledged on all hands to be judgment. We apprehend next instant a cruel, ungenerous action; and we declare it to be wrong. Now, in the one case, as in the other, there is a judgment of the mind. It is true, that in the two cases, the judgments are pronounced according to very different principles or laws—so very different as to justify us in speaking of the conscience as different from the reason. It is quite conceivable that the mind might possess reason, and distinguish between the true and the false, and yet be incapable of distinguishing between virtue and vice. We are entitled therefore to hold, that the drawing of moral distinctions is not comprehended in the simple exercise of the reason. The conscience, in short, is a different faculty of the mind from the mere understanding. We must hold it to be simple and unresolvable, till we fall in with a successful decomposition of it into its elements. In the absence of any such decomposition, we hold that there are no simpler ele-

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ments in the human mind which will yield us the ideas of the morally good and evil, of moral obligation and guilt, of merit and demerit. Compound and decompound all other ideas as you please—associate them together as you may—they will never give us the ideas referred to, so peculiar and full of meaning, without a faculty implanted in the mind for this very purpose.

3. *Conscience may be considered as possessing a class of emotions, or as a sentiment.*—We have endeavored, indeed, to show that it is not a mere emotion, or class of emotions. But while it is something more than a "class of feelings,"—it is so described by Mackintosh—it does most assuredly contain and imply feelings. The mind is as conscious of the emotions as it is of the judgment.

In opposition to those who insist that there is nothing but emotion, it might be urged, in a general way, that emotions never exist independently of certain conceptions or ideas.—Let a man stop himself at the time when emotion is the highest and passion the strongest, and he will find as the substratum of the whole, a certain apprehension or conception formed by the faculties of the mind. There is an idea acting as the basis of every feeling, and so far determining the feeling: and the feeling rises or falls according as the conception takes in more or less of that which raises the emotions. The ideas which raise emotions have been called (by Alison in his Essay on Taste) "ideas of emotions."

The conception of certain objects is no way fitted to raise emotions. The conception, for instance, of an angle, or of a stone, or a house, will not excite any emotions whatever. Other conceptions do as certainly raise emotions, as the conception of an object as about to communicate pleasure or pain. Such feelings arise whether we contemplate this pleasure or pain as about to visit ourselves or others.

Emotion rises not only on the contemplation of pleasure and pain to ourselves or others, it rises also on the contemplation of virtue and vice. When the conscience declares an action presented to the mind to be good or bad, certain emotions instantly present themselves. Man is so constituted that the contemplation of virtuous and vicious action—declared so to be by the conscience—like the contemplation of pleasure and pain, awakens the sensibility.

While thus the conception determines the emotions—does not constitute them, however—it is not to be forgotten that emotions have a most powerful influence upon the current of

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the thoughts and ideas. The emotions may be compared to fluids which press equally in all directions, and need, therefore, a vessel to contain them, or a channel formed in which they may flow; but like these fluids, they yield the strongest of all pressure, and serve most important purposes in the economy of life.

Upon these general grounds, then, we would be inclined to assert that there must be the decision of a faculty before there can be a feeling in regard to moral actions. "At the same time," says Cousin, "that we do such and such an act, it raises in our mind a judgment *which declares its character*, and it is on the back of this judgment that our sensibility is moved. The sentiment is not this primitive and immediate judgment, but is its powerful echo. So far from being the foundation of the idea of the good, it supposes it." On the other hand, we acknowledge that the existence of the feeling has a most powerful reflex influence in quickening the faculty. It breathes life into, and lends wings to what would otherwise be so inert and inanimate. But we must quit these general grounds. The connection between the emotions and their relative conceptions has not received that attention which it deserves from mental analysts. It is a tropic lying open to the first voyager who may have sufficient courage and skill to explore, without making shipwreck of himself, the capes and bays by which this land and water indent each other.

The moral faculty, then, can never be employed without emotion. It is the master power of the human soul, and it is befitting that it should never move without a retinue of attendants. These feelings, which are its necessary train or accompaniment in all its exercises, impart to them all their liveliness and fervor. They communicate to the soul that noble elevation which it feels on the contemplation of benevolence, of devotedness in a good cause, and patriotism and piety under all their forms. These attendants of this monarch faculty, while they gladden and manifest its presence when the will is obedient to its master, are at the same time ready to become the avenging spirits which follow up the commission of crime with more fearful lashings than the serpent-covered furies were ever supposed to have inflicted. In short, the conscience travels like a court of justice, with a certain air of dignity, and with its attendant ministers to execute its decisions. All this is as it should be. If it is desirable, as we have seen, that morality should be presented under the character of a law, and that it should have its appropriate facul-

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ty, it is equally needful that it should have its train of feelings, to give a practical interest and impetus to all the authoritative decisions which this judge pronounces. "The design of the sentiment," it is finely remarked by Cousin, "is to render sensible to the soul the connection of virtue and happiness."

It is always to be borne in mind however, that the simple possession of conscience, with its accompanying emotions, does not render any individual virtuous. We are made virtuous, not by the possession of the faculty which judges of virtuous actions, or of the emotions which echo its decisions, but by the possession of the virtuous actions themselves. This may seem an obvious truth when it is stated; but it has been strangely overlooked by many persons, who conclude that man is virtuous, because he is possessed of such a power and of its responsive feelings. These persons do not reflect that the faculty and its accompanying sentiment are ready to condemn the possessor of them, when he is without the affections and actions, in which virture truly consists. We believe that there is no responsible agent so fallen and corrupted that he does not possess this conscience and these feelings;—both, it may be, are sadly perverted in their exercise—yet still he possesses them in their essential form, and that by the appointment of God, in order that they may so far punish him, and enable him to measure the depth of his degardation.

The view now offered of conscience, from the way in which we have been obliged to state it, may seem a very complex one. In reality, it is very simple. It is to be regretted, that in giving a description of any mental state, we are constrained to use language which sounds so abstract and metaphysical. The conscience is the mind acting according to a moral law, and its judgments giving rise to emotions. We do not see how anything could be simpler.

The writer who is generally acknowledged to have written in the most masterly way on the conscience, seems to have viewed in it the light now presented. He was not required, for the object which he had in view, to give a psychological analysis of it; but it is evident, that he views it under the threefold aspect in which it is presented. Sir James Mackintosh blames him for not steadily presenting conscience under one aspect—that is, for not representing it as merely a "class of feelings." That which Mackintosh represents as a defect, we hold to be an excellence. He calls it again and again a "principle," and a "law," the "principle of reflection and

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conscience," and the "law of his creation," and "a determinate rule," and "the guide of life, and that by which men are a law unto themselves;" and affirms, that "every man may find within himself the rule of right and obligations to follow it." That he regarded the conscience as partaking both of the nature of a faculty and a feeling, is evident from his calling it a "faculty in the heart," and more particularly from the following passage: "It is manifest, that great part of common language, and of common behavior over the world, is formed on the supposition of such a moral faculty, whether called conscience, moral reason, moral sense, or Divine reason, whether considered as a *sentiment of the understanding, or a perception of the heart, or, which seems the truth, as including both.*"

We have a complete view of the conscience only when we look at it under this three-fold aspect, in this its triune nature. In each of these characters it serves a seperate purpose. As a law fundamental in the human mind, it reveals authoritatively the will of God. As a faculty, it is a master ever ready to issue commands, and an arbiter ever ready to decide. As a sentiment, it furnishes pleasure, stirs up desire, and leads to activity. Nor is it unworthy of being remarked, that it is in its very nature connected, both with the understanding and the feelings, partaking of the strength and stability of the one, and the life and facility of the other. It is the "faculty of the heart," and the "sentiment of the understanding." While thus linking itself with all parts of our nature, it speaks as one having authority to every other power and principle of the human mind. If this "faculty of the heart" were allowed its proper power, it would, in the name of the supreme Governor, preserve for him—that is, for God—the place which he ought to have in every human head and heart. *M'Cosh*, *p.* 302.

(29.) Laws of the Operation of Conscience, according to M'Cosh.

It may be useful to observe a little more minutely some of the laws of the working of the conscience.

1*st. It is of mental, and of mental acts exclusively, that the conscience judges.* It has no judgment whatever to pronounce on a mere bodily act. We look out at the window, and we see two individuals in different places chastising

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two different children. The conscience pronounces no judgment in the one case or the other, whatever the feelings may do, until we have learned the motives which have led to the performance of the acts. If upon inquiry we find the motive in the one case to be the extreme care which the parent takes of the moral well-being of his child, and the motive in the other case to be blind passion, we now approve of the one individual and disapprove of the other; but let it be observed, that the conscience pronounces its judgment not on the outward actions, but on the internal motives and feelings.

2*d. It is of acts of the will, and of acts of the will exclusively, that the conscience judges.* In saying so we use *will* in a large sense, as large as that department which has been allotted to it, we believe, by God in the human mind. We use it as including all wishes, desires, intentions, and resolutions, all that is properly active and personal in man. Now, we think that the principle needs only to be announced to command conviction, namely, that it is of acts of the will, and acts of the will only, that the conscience judges, declaring them to be either virtuous or vicious. Of mere sensations, of mere intellectual acts, of mere sensibility, it takes no direct cognizance; in themselves these have no moral qualities. No doubt these sensations, these intellectual ideas or emotions, may be fitted to lead to what is evil, and so far the conscience will be led to pronounce a judgment in which they are embraced; but the actual judgment pronounced is, that the will is doing wrong in not instantly taking steps to banish them from the mind. We read an obscene book, and impure imaginations rise up in our minds; but here let it be remarked, that what the conscience condemns is not so much the mere natural feelings as the voluntary reading of a work which is fitted to call them forth.

3*d. The conscience approves and disapproves not of isolated acts merely, but also of the mind or agent manifested in*

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these acts. The conscience judges according to truth, and regards all mental acts as the mind acting, and pronounces its verdict, not so much on the mere acts as on the mind voluntarily acting in them. This may seem an unnecessarily metaphysical method of expressing an obvious truth, but, in the sequel, it will be found of no little consequence to be able precisely to determine what is the object at which the conscience looks, and on which it pronounces its judgments.

4th. The concience pronounces its decision on the state of mind of the responsible agent as the same is presented to it. It is not the business, or at least the direct office of the conscience, to determine what is the precise mental state—what is the wish, desire, intention, or resolution of any responsible agent. This must be ascertained by the usual rules and laws of evidence, and by the use of the ordinary intellectual faculties. It is upon the view of the voluntary acts of the mind, as they are represented to it, that the conscience utters its sentence. Thus, in the case which we have put of the two parents chastising their children, the one act presented to the conscience is that of a parent seeking, by proper punishment to correct vice, and the other act, is that of an individual cherishing passion, and acting upon it. It is upon this representation that the conscience proceeds, and provided the representation be correct, the decision will be infallible. But let it be observed that the representation may be an erroneous one. Under the influence of hasty feeling or prejudice, we may have formed very incorrect judgements as to the real state of mind of the individuals whose conduct we have been observing. While the conscience has pronounced verdicts which are righteous in themselves, these verdicts may be mistaken in regard to the given individual; for the one parent may not have been under the influence of such high-minded virtue, nor the other the slave of passion, as has been supposed. The conscience is in the position of a barrister, whose opinion is

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asked in matters of legal difficulty. In both cases the judgment given proceeds on the supposed accuracy of a representation submitted, but which may be very partial, or very perverted.

It followed—*5th. That there may be much uncertainty, or confusion, or positive error, in the judgments of the conscience, because given upon false representations.* All the actions of man are of a concrete character. By far the greater number of the voluntary acts of mankind are of a very complex nature. It is difficult for the individual himself, and still more difficult for a neighbor, to determine what are the precise motives by which he is influenced in any given act. The springs of human action are often as difficult to be discovered as the true fountains of the great African rivers, which rise so far in the unapproachable interior; and there is room for endless disputes as to what is the originating and original motive, without which the act would not have been proposed or performed; and when we have fixed on any one source, we are not sure that they may not be others that dispute with it the pre-eminence. *M'Cosh, p.* 336.

(30.) PALEY'S CHAPTER ON HAPPINESS—WHAT IT DOES NOT CONSIST IN.

1. Then Happiness does not consist in the pleasures of sense, in whatever profusion or variety they be enjoyed.—By the pleasures of sense, I mean, as well the animal gratifications of eating, drinking, and that by which the species is continued, as the more refined pleasure of music, painting, architecture, gardening, splendid shows, theatric exhibitions; and the pleasures, lastly, of active sports, as of hunting, shooting, fishing, &c. For,

1st, These pleasures continue but a little while at a time. This is true of them all, especially of the grosser sort of them. Laying aside the preparation and the expectation, and com-

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puting strictly the actual sensation, we shall be surprised to find how inconsiderable a portion of our time they occupy, how few hours in the four and twenty they are able to fill up.

2d, These pleasures, by repetition, lose their relish. It is a property of the machine, for which we know no remedy, that the organs by which we perceive pleasure are blunted and benumbed by being frequently exercised in the same way. There is hardly any one who has not found the difference between a gratification, when new, and when familiar; or any pleasure which does not become indifferent as it grows habitual.

3d, The eagerness for high and intense delights takes away the relish from all others; and as such delights fall rarely in our way, the greater part of our time becomes, from this cause, empty and uneasy.

There is hardly any delusion by which men are greater sufferers in their happiness than by their expecting too much from what is called pleasure; that is, from those intense delights which vulgarily engross the name of pleasure. The very expectation spoils them. When they do come, we are often engaged in taking pains to persuade ourselves how much we are pleased, rather than enjoying any pleasure which springs naturally out of the object. And whenever we depend upon being vastly delighted, we always go home secretly grieved at missing our aim. Likewise, as has been observed just now, when this humor of being prodigiously delighted has once taken hold of the imagination, it hinders us from providing for, or acquiescing in, those gentle soothing engagements, the due variety and succession of which are the only things that supply a vein or continued stream of happiness.

What I have been able to observe of that part of mankind, whose professed pursuit is pleasure, and who are withheld in the pursuit by no restraints of fortune, or scruples of conscience corresponds sufficiently with this account. I have commonly

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remarked in such men a restless and inextinguishable passion for variety; a great part of their time to be vacant, and so much of it irksome; and that, with whatever eagerness and expectation they set out, they become, by degrees, fastidious in their choice of pleasures, languid in the enjoyment, yet miserable under the want of it.

The truth seems to be, that there is a limit at which these pleasures soon arrive, and from which they ever afterwards decline. They are by necessity of short duration, as the organs cannot hold on their emotions beyond a certain length of time; and if you endeavour to compensate for this imperfection in their nature by the frequency with which you repeat them, you suffer more than you gain, by the fatigue of the faculties, and the diminution of sensibility.

We have said nothing in this account, of the loss of opportunities or the decay of faculties, which, whenever they happen, leave the voluptuary destitute and desperate; teased by desires that can never be gratified, and the memory of pleasures which must return no more.

It will also be allowed by those who have experienced it, and perhaps by those alone, that pleasure, which is purchased by the encumbrance of our fortune, is purchased too dear; the pleasure never compensating for the perpetual irritation of embarrassed circumstances.

These pleasures, after all, have their value; and as the young are always too eager in their pursuit of them, the old are sometimes too remiss, that is, too studious in their ease, to be at the pains for them which they really deserve.

2. Neither does happiness consist in an exemption from pain, labor, care, business, suspense, molestation, and "those evils which are without;" such a state being usually attended, not with ease, but with depression of spirits, a tastelessness in all our ideas, imaginary anxieties, and the whole train of hypochondriacal affections.

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For which reason, the expectations of those who retire from their shops and counting-houses, to enjoy the remainder of their days in leisure and tranquility, are seldom answered by the effect; much less of such as, in a fit of chagrin, shut themselves up in cloisters and hermitages, or quit the world, and their stations in it, for solitude and repose.

Where there exists a known external cause of uneasiness the cause may be removed, and the uneasiness will cease.—But those imaginary distresses which men feel for want of real ones, (and which are equally tormenting, and so far equally painful,) as they depend upon no single or assignable subject of uneasiness, admit oftentimes of no application of relief.

Hence a moderate pain, upon which the attention may fasten and spend itself, is to many a refreshment: as a fit of the gout will sometimes cure the spleen. And the same of any less violent agatition of the mind, as a literary controversy, a lawsuit, a contested election, and, above all, gaming; the passion for which, in men of fortune and liberal minds, is only to be accounted for on this principle.

3. Neither does happiness consist in greatness, rank, or elevated station.

Were it true that all superiority offorded pleasure, it would follow, that by how much we were the greater, that is, the more persons we were superior to, in the same proportion, so far as depended upon this cause, we should be the happier; but so it is, that no superiority yields any satisfaction, save that which we possess or obtain over those with whom we immediately compare ourselves. The shepherd perceives no pleasure in his superiority over his dog; the farmer, in his superiority over the shepherd; the lord, in his superiority over the farmer; nor the king, lastly, in his superiority over the lord. Superiority, where there is no competition, is seldom contemplated; what most men are quite unconscious of.

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But if the same shephard can run, fight or wrestle, better than the peasants of his village; if the farmer can show better cattle, if he keep a better, horse, or be supposed to have a longer purse, than any farmer in the hundred; if the lord have more interest in an election, greater favor at court, a better house, or larger estate than any nobleman in the conntry; if the king possess a more extensive territory, a more powerful fleet or army, a more splendid establishment, more loyal subjects, or more weight and authority in adjusting the affairs of nations, than any prince in Europe;—in all these cases, the parties feel an actual satisfaction in their superiority.

Now the conclusion that follows from hence is this; that the pleasures of ambition, which are supposed to be pecular to high stations, are in reality common to all conditions. The farrier, who shoes a horse better, and who is in greater request for his skill than any man within ten miles of him, possesses, for all that I can see, the delight of distinction and of excelling, as truly and substantially as the statesman, the soldier, and the scholar, who have filled Europe with the reputation of their wisdom, their valor, or their knowledge.

No superiority appears to be of any account, but superiority over a rival. This, it is manifest, may exist wherever rivalships do; and rivalships fall out among men of all ranks and degrees. The object of emulation, the dignity or magnitude of this object, makes no difference; as it is not what either possesses that constitutes the pleasures, but what one possesses more than the other.

Philosophy smiles at the contempt with which the rich and great speak of the petty strifes and competitions of the poor; not reflecting that these strifes and competitions are just as reasonable as their own, and the pleasure which success affords the same.

Our position is, that happiness does not consist in greatness.

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And this position we make out by showing, that even what are supposed to be the peculiar advantages of greatness, the pleasures of ambition and superiority, are in reality common to all conditions. But whether the pursuits of ambition be ever wise, whether they contribute more to the happiness or misery of the pursuers, is a different question; and a question concerning which we may be allowed to entertain great doubt. The pleasure of success is exquisite; so also is the anxiety of the pursuit, and the pain of disappointment;—and what is the worst part of the account, the pleasure is short lived.—We soon cease to look back upon those whom we have left behind; new contests are engaged in, new prospects unfold themselves; a succession of struggles are kept up, while there is a rival left inside the compass of our views and professions; and when there is none, the pleasure with the pursuit is at an end. *Paley's Moral Philosophy, p.* 25.

(31.) PALEY'S ACCOUNT OF THE INFLUENCE OF HABITS ON HAPPINESS.

Happiness depends upon the prudent constitution of the habits. The art in which the secret of human happiness in a great measure consists, is to *set* the habits in such a manner, that every change may be a change for the better. The habits themselves are much the same; for whatever is made habitual becomes smooth, and easy, and nearly indifferent. The return to an old habit is likewise easy, what ever the habit be. Therefore the advantage is with those habits which allow of an indulgence in the deviation from them. The luxurious receive no greater pleasure from their dainties than the peasant does from his bread and cheese; but the peasant, whenever he goes abroad, finds a feast; whereas the epicure must be well entertained to escape disgust. Those who spend every day at cards, and those who go every day to plough, pass their time much alike; intent upon what they are about,

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wanting nothing, regreting nothing, they are both for the time in a state of ease; but then, whatever suspends the occupation of the card player distresses him; whereas to the laborer every interruption is a refreshment; and this appears in the different effects that Sunday produces upon the two, which proves a day of recreation to the one, but a lamentable burden to the other. The man who has learned to live alone feels his spirits enlivened whenever he enters into company, and takes his leave without regret: another, who has long been accustomed to a crowd, or continual succession of company experiences in company no elevation of spirits, nor any greater satisfaction than what the man of a retired life finds in his chimney corner. So far their conditions are equal; but let a change of place, fortune or situation separate the companion from his circle, his visitors, his club, common room, or coffee-house, and the difference and advantage in the choice and constitution of the two habits will show itself. Solitude comes to the one clothed with melancholy; to the other it brings liberty and quiet.—You will see the one fretful and restless, at a loss how to dispose of his time till the hour come round when he may forget himself in bed; the other, easy and satisfied, taking up his book or his pipe as soon as he finds himself alone; ready to admit any little amusement that casts up, or to turn his hands and attention to the first business that presents itself; or content, without either, to sit still, and let his train of thought glide indolently through his brain, without much use, perhaps, or pleasure, but without *hankering* after anything better, or without irritation. A reader, who has inured himself to books of science and argumentation, if a novel, a well written pamphlet, and article of news, a narrative of a curious voyage, or a journal of a traveller fall in his way, sits down to the repast with relish; enjoys his entertainment while it lasts, and can return, when it is over, to his graver reading without

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distaste. Another, with whom nothing will go down but works of humor and pleasantry, or whose curiosity must be interested by perpetual novelty, will consume a bookseller's window in half a forenoon; during which time he is rather in search of diversion than diverted; and as books to his taste are few and short, and rapidly read over, the stock is soon exhausted, when he is left without resource from this principal supply of harmless amusement. *Paley's Moral Philosophy, p.* 31.

(32.) Stewart's Exposition of Moral Obligation.

According to some systems, moral obligation is founded entirely on our belief that virtue is enjoined by the command of God. But how, it may be asked, does this belief impose an obligation? Only one of two answers can be given. Either that there is a moral fitness that we should conform our will to that of the Author and the Governor of the universe; or that a rational self-love should induce us, from motives of prudence, to study every means of rendering ourselves acceptable to the Almighty Arbiter of happiness and misery. On the first supposition we reason in a circle. We resolve our sense of moral obligation into our sense of religion, and the sense of religion into that of moral obligation.

The other system, which makes virtue a mere matter of prudence, although not so obviously unsatisfactory, leads to consequences which sufficiently invalidate every argument in its favor. Among others it leads us to conclude, 1. That the disbelief of a future state absolves from all moral obligation, excepting in so far as we find virtue to be conducive to our present interest: 2. That a being independently and completely happy cannot have any moral perceptions or any moral attributes.

But farther, the notions of reward and punishment presuppose the notions of right and wrong. They are sanctions of

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virtue, or additional motives to the practice of it, but they suppose the existence of some previous obligation.

In the last place, if moral obligation be constituted by a regard to our situation in another life, how shall the existence of a future state be proved, or even rendered probable by the light of nature? or how shall we discover what conduct is acceptable to the Deity? The truth is, that the strongest presumption for such a state is deduced from our natural notions of right and wrong; of merit and demerit; and from a comparison between these and the general course of human affairs.

It is absurd, therefore, to ask why we are bound to practice virtue. The very notion of virtue implies the notion of obligation. Every being who is conscious of the distinction between right and wrong carries about with him a law which he is bound to observe, notwithstanding he may be in total ignorance of a future state. "What renders obnoxious to punishment," (as Dr. Butler has well remarked,) "is not the foreknowledge of it, but merely the violating a known obligation." Or (as Plato has expressed the same idea,) το μεν ορθον νομος εστι βασιλικος.

From what has been stated, it follows that the moral faculty, considered as an active power of the mind, differs essentially from all the others hitherto enumerated. The least violation of its authority fills us with remorse. On the contrary, the greater the sacrifices we make in obedience to its suggestions, the greater are our satisfaction and triumph.

The supreme authority of conscience, although beautifully described by many of the ancient moralists, was not sufficiently attended to by modern writers as a fundamental principle in the science of ethics till the time of Dr. Butler. Too little stress is laid on it by Lord Shaftesbury; and the omission is the chief defect in his system of morals. Shaftesbury's opinion, however, although he does not state it explicitly in

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his inquiry, seems to have been precisely the same at bottom with that of Butler.

One of the clearest and most concise statements of this doctrine that I have met with is in a sermon on the Nature and Obligations of Virtue, by Dr. Adams of Oxford; the justness of whose ideas on this subject make it the more surprising that his pupil and friend, Dr. Samuel Johnson, should have erred so very widely from the truth. "*Right*," (says he,) "implies *duty* in its idea. To perceive an action to be right is to see a reason for doing it in the action itself, abstracted from all other considerations whatever; and this perception, this acknowledged rectitude in the action, is the very essence of obligation, that which commands the approbation and choice, and binds the conscience of every rational human being."—"Nothing can bring us under an obligation to do what appears to our moral judgment *wrong*. It may be supposed our interest to do this, but it cannot be supposed our duty. For, I ask, if some power, which we are unable to resist, should assume the command over us, and give us laws which are unrighteous and unjust, should we be under an obligation to obey him? Should we not rather be obliged to shake off the yoke, and to resist such usurpation, if it were in our power? However, then, we might be swayed by hope or fear, it is plain that we are under an obligation to *right*, which is antecedent, and in order and nature superior to all other. Power may compel, interest may bribe, pleasure may persuade, but reason only can oblige. This is the only authority which rational beings can own, and to which they owe obedience."

Dr. Clark has expressed himself nearly to the same purpose. "The judgment and conscience of a man's own mind concerning the reasonableness and fitness of the thing is the truest and formalest obligation; for whoever acts contrary to this sense and conscience of his own mind is necessarily *self-*

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condemned; and the greatest and strongest of all obligations is that which a man cannot break through without condemning himself. So far, therefore, as men are conscious of what is *right* and *wrong*, so far they are under an obligation to act accordingly."

The fact, however, is, that as this view of human nature is the most simple, so it is the most ancient which occurs in the history of moral science. It was the doctrine of the Pythagorean school, as appears from a fragment of *Theages*, a Pythagorean writer, published in Gale's *Opuscula Mythologica*. It is also explained by Plato in some of his dialogues, in which he compares the soul to a commonwealth, and *reason* to the council of state, which governs and directs the whole.

Cicero has expressed the same system very clearly and concisely. "Duplex enim est vis animorum atque naturæ. Una pars in appetitu posita est, quæ hominem huc et illuc rapit, quæ est ὁρμὴ Græce, altera in ratione, quæ docet et explanat, quid faciendum fugiendumve sit. Ita fit ut ratio præsit, appetitus obtemperet." In the following passage this doctrine is enforced in a manner peculiarly sublime and expressive.

"Est quidem vera *Lex*, recta ratio, naturæ congruens, diffusa in omnes, constans, sempiterna, quæ vocet ad officium jubendo, vetando a fraude deterreat. Nec erit alia Lex Romæ, alia Athenis, alia nunc, alia posthac; sed et omnes gentes, et omni tempore una lex et sempiterna et immortalis continebit; unusque erit communis quasi magister et imperator omnium Deus. Ille hujus legis inventor, disceptator, lator. Cui qui non parebit, ipse se fugiet, ac naturam hominis aspernabitur; hoc ipso luet maximas pœnas, etiamsi cætera supplicia, quæ putantur, effugerit."

It is very justly observed by Mr. Smith, (and I consider the remark as of the highest importance,) that "if the distinction pointed out in the foregoing quotations between the moral

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faculty and our other active powers be acknowledged, it is of the less consequence what particular theory we adopt concerning the origin of our moral ideas." And accordingly, though he resolves moral approbation ultimately into a *feeling of the mind*, he nevertheless represents the supremacy of conscience as a principle which is equally essential to all the different systems that have been proposed on the subject. "Upon whatever we suppose our moral faculties to be founded," (I quote his own words,) whether upon a certain modification of reason, upon an original instinct called a moral sense, or upon some other principle of our nature, it cannot be doubted that they are given us for the direction of our conduct in this life. They carry along with them the most evident badges of their authority, which denote that they were set up within us to be the supreme arbiters of all our actions; to superintend all our senses, passions, and appetites; and to judge how far each of them was to be either indulged or restrained. Our moral faculties are by no means, as some have pretended, upon a level in this respect with the other faculties and appetites of our nature, endowed with no more right to restrain these last, than these last are to restrain them. No other faculty or principle of action judges of any other. Love does not judge of resentment, nor resentment of love. Those two passions may be opposite to one another, but cannot, with any propriety, be said to approve or disapprove of one another. But it is the peculiar office of those faculties now under consideration to judge, to bestow censure or applause upon all the other principles of our nature."

"Since these, therefore," (continues Mr. Smith,) "were plainly intended to be the governing principles of human nature, the rules which they prescribe are to be regarded as the commands and laws of the Deity promulgated by those vicegerents which he has thus set up within us. By acting according to their dictates we may be said, in some sense, to co-op-

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erate with the Deity, and to advance, as far as in our power, the plan of Providence. By acting otherwise, on the contrary, we seem to obstruct in some measure, the scheme which the Author of Nature has established for the happiness and perfection of the world, and to declare ourselves in some measure the enemies of God. Hence we are naturally encouraged to hope for His extraordinary favor and reward in the one case, and to dread his vengeance and punishment in the other." *Stewart's Active & Moral Powers, vol.* 1 *p.* 293.

(33.) CHAPTER ON MERIT AND DEMERIT—FROM COUSIN.

We arrive, then, at the last element of the moral phenomenon, the judgment of merit and demerit.

At the same time that we judge that a man has done a good or bad action, we bear this other judgment quite as necessary as the former, to wit, that if this man has acted well he has merited a reward, and if he has acted ill, he has merited a punishment. It is exactly the same with this judgment as with that of the good. It may be outwardly expressed in a more or less lively manner, according as it is mingled with more or less energetic feelings. Sometimes it will be only a benevolent disposition towards the virtuous agent, and an unfavourable disposition towards the culpable agent; sometimes it will be enthusiasm or indignation. In some cases one will make himself the executor of the judgment that he bears, he will crown the hero and load the criminal with chains. But when all your feelings are calmed, when enthusiasm has cooled as well as indignation, when time and separation have rendered an action almost indifferent to you, you none the less persist in judging that the author of this action merits a reward or a punishment, according to the quality of the action. You decide that you were right in the sentiments that you felt, and, although they are extinguished, you declare them legitimate.

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The judgment of merit and demerit is essentially tied to the judgment of good and evil. In fact, he who does an action without knowing whether it is good or bad, has neither merit nor demerit in doing it. It is with him the same as with those physical agents that accomplish the most beneficent or the most destructive works, to which we never think of attributing knowledge and will, consequently accountability. Why are there no penalties attached to involuntary crimes? Because for that very reason they are not regarded as crimes. Hence it comes that the question of premeditation is so grave in all criminal processes. Why is the child, up to a certain age, subject to none but light punishments? Because where the idea of the good and liberty are wanting, merit and demerit are also wanting, which alone authorize reward and punishment. The author of an injurious but, involuntary action is condemned to an indemnity corresponding to the damage done; he is not condemned to a punishment properly so called.

Such are the conditions of merit and demerit. When these conditions are fulfilled, merit and demerit manifest themselves, and involve reward and punishment.

Merit is the natural right we have to be rewarded; demerit the natural right that others have to punish us, and, if we may thus speak, the right that we have to be punished. This expression may seem paradoxical, nevertheless it is true. A culpable man, who, opening his eyes to the light of the good, should comprehend the necessity of expiation, not only by internal repentance, without which all the rest is in vain, but also by a real and effective suffering, such a culpable man would have the right to claim the punishment that alone can reconcile him with order. And such reclamations are not so rare. Do we not every day see criminals denouncing themselves and offering themselves up to avenge the public?—Others prefer to satisfy justice, and do not have recourse to

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the pardon that law places in the hands of the monarch in order to represent in the state charity and mercy, as tribunals represent in it justice. This is a manifest proof of the natural and profound roots of the idea of punishment and reward.

Merit and demerit imperatively claim, like a lawful debt, punishment and reward; but reward must not be confounded with merit, nor punisment with demerit; this would be confounding cause and effect, principle and consequence.—Even were reward and punishment not to take place, merit and demerit would subsist. Punishment and reward satisfy merit and demerit, but do not constitute them. Suppress all reward and all punishment, and you do not thereby suppress merit and demerit; on the contrary, suppress merit and demerit, and there are no longer true punishments and true rewards. Unmerited good and honors are only material advantages; reward is essentially moral, and its value is independent of its form. One of those crowns of oak that the early Romans decreed to heroism is worth more than all the riches in the world, when it is the sign of the recognition and the admiration of a people. To reward is to give in return. He who is rewarded must have first given something in order to deserve to be rewarded. Reward accorded to merit is a debt; reward without merit is a charity or a theft. It is the same with punishment. It is the relation of pain to a fault, in this relation, and not in the pain alone, is the truth as well as the shame of chastisement.

'Tis crime and not the scaffold makes the shame.

Cousin's Essay upon the True, Good and Beautiful, p. 289.

(34.) STEWART UPON THE NATURE AND ESSENCE OF VIRTUE.

It was before remarked, that the different theories of Virtue which have prevailed in modern times have arisen chiefly from attempts to trace all the branches of our duty to one

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principle of action; such as a rational self-love, benevolence, justice, or a disposition to obey the will of God.

That none of these theories is agreeable to fact may be collected from the reasonings which have been already stated. The harmony, however, which exists among our various good dispositions, and their general coincidence in determining us to the same course of life, bestows on all of them, when skilfully proposed, a certain degree of plausibility.

The systematical spirit from which they have taken their rise, although a fertile source of error, has not been without its use; inasmuch as it has roused the attention of ingenious men to the most important of all studies, that of the end and destination of human life. The facility, at the same time, with which so great a variety of consequences may all be traced from distinct principles, affords a demonstration of that unity and consistency of design, which is still more conspicuous in the moral than in the material world.

Of the General Definition of Virtue.—Having taken a cursory survey of the chief branches of our Duty, we are prepared to enter on the general question concerning the *Nature and Essence of Virtue.* In fixing on the arrangement of this part of my subject, it appeared to me more agreeable to the established rules of philosophising, to consider, first, our duties in detail; and after having thus laid a solid foundation in the way of analysis, to attempt to raise to the *general idea* in which all our duties concur, than to circumscribe our inquiries, at our first outset, within the limits of an arbitrary and partial definition. What I have now to offer, therefore, will consist of little more than some obvious and necessary consequences from principles which have been already stated.

The various duties which have been considered all agree with each other in one common quality, that of being *obli-*

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gatory on rational and voluntary agents; and they are all enjoined by the same authority,—*the authority of conscience.* These duties, therefore, are but different articles of *one law*, which is properly expressed by the word *Virtue.*

An observation to the same purpose is put into the mouth of Socrates by Plato. "So likewise concerning the virtues; though they are many and various, there is one common idea belonging to them all, by which they are virtuous." Ουτω δη και περι των αρετων, καν οι πολλαι και παντοδαπαι ωσιν, εν γε τι εἰδος ταυτον απασαι εχουσι δι' ὁ εισιν αρεται.

As all the virtues are enjoined by the same authority (the authority of conscience,) the man whose ruling principle of action is a sense of duty, will observe all the different virtues with the same reverence and the same zeal. He who lives in the *habitual* neglect of any one of them shows plainly, that where his conduct happens to coincide with what the rules of morality prescribe, it is owing merely to an accidental agreement between his duty and his inclination, and that he is not actuated by that motive which can alone render our conduct meritorious. It is justly said, therefore, that to live in the habitual practice of any one vice, is to throw off our allegiance to conscience and to our Maker, as decidedly as if we had violated all the rules which duty prescribes; and it is in this sense, I presume, that we ought to interpret that passage of the Sacred Writings, in which it is said, "*He who keepeth the whole law, and offendeth in one point, is guilty of all.*

The word *virtue*, however, (as I shall have occasion to remark more particularly in the next section) is applied not only to express a particular course of external conduct, but to express *a particular species or discription of human character.* When so applied, it seems properly to denote a *habit* of mind, as distinguished from *occasional acts* of duty. It was formerly said that the characters of men receive their

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denominations of covetous, voluptuous, ambitious, &c. from the particular active principle which prevailingly influences the conduct. A man, accordingly, whose ruling or habitual principle of action is a sense of duty, or a regard to what is right, may be properly denominated virtuous. Agreeably to this view of the subject, the ancient Pythagoreans defined virtue to be Ἕξις του δεοντος, the oldest definition of virtue of which we have any account, and one of the most unexceptionable which is yet to be found in any system of philosophy.

This account of virtue coincides very nearly with what I conceive to be Dr. Reid's, from some passages in his Essays on the Active Powers of Man. Virtue he seems to consider as consisting "in a fixed purpose or resolution to act according to our sense of duty."

"Suppose a man" (says he) "to have exercised his intellectual and moral faculties so far as to have distinct notions of justice and injustice, and of the consequences of both, and after due deliberation to have formed a fixed purpose to adhere inflexibly to justice, and never to handle the wages of iniquity:

"Is not this the man whom we should call a just man? We consider the moral virtues as inherent in the mind of a good man, even where there is no opportunity of exercising them. And what is it in the mind which we can call the virtue of justice when it is not exercised? It can be nothing but a fixed purpose or determination to act according to the rules of justice when there is opportunity."

With all this I perfectly agree. It is the fixed purpose to do what is *right*, which evidently constitutes what we call *a virtuous disposition*. But it appears to me that virtue, considered as an attribute of character, is more properly defined by the *habit* which the fixed purpose gradually forms, than by the fixed purpose itself. It is from the eternal habit alone that other men can judge of the purpose; and it is from the

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uniformity and spontaneity of his habit that the individual himself must judge how far his purposes are sincere and steady.

I have said that this account of *virtue* coincides with the definition of it given by the ancient Pythagoreans; and it also coincides with the opinion of Aristotle, by whom the ethical doctrine of the Pythagoreans was rendered much more complete and satisfactory. According to this philosopher the different virtues are "*practical habits, voluntary in their origin*, and agreeable to right reason." This last philosopher seems indeed to have considered the subject of *habits* in general more attentively than any other writer of antiquity; and he has suggested some important hints with respect to them, which well deserve the attention of those who may turn their thoughts to this very interesting class of facts in the human constitution.

In referring to these doctrines of the ancient schools, I am far from proceeding on the supposition, that questions of science are to be decided by authority. But I own it always appears to me to afford a strong presumption in favor of any conclusion concerning the principles of human nature, when we find it sanctioned by the judgment of those who have been led to it by separate and independent processes of reasoning. For the same reason I think it of consequence to remark the coincidence between the account now given of *Virtue* and that of Mr. Hobbes, one of the most sceptical, but, at the same time, one of the most acute and original of our English metaphysicians. "Virtue" (says he) "is the habit of doing according to those laws of Nature that tend to our preservation; and vice is the habit of doing the contrary." The definition indeed is faulty, in so far as it involves the author's selfish theory of morals; but in considering the word *virtue* as expressive of a *habit of action*, it approaches nearer to the

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truth than the greater part of the definitions of virtue to be found in the writings of the moderns.

These observations lead to an explanation of what has at first sight the appearance of paradox in the ethical doctrines of Aristotle, that where there is self-denial there is no virtue. That the merit of particular actions is increased by the self-denial with which they are accompanied cannot be disputed; but it is only when we are *learning* the practice of our duties that this self-denial is exercised, (for the practice of morality, as well as of everything else, is facilitated by repeated acts;) and therefore, if the word virtue be employed to express that *habit* of mind which it is the great object of a good man to confirm, it will follow, that, in proportion as he approaches to it, his efforts of self-denial must diminish, and that all occasion for them would cease if his end were completely attained.

The definition of virtue given by Aristotle, as consisting in "right practical habits *voluntary in* "*their origin*," is well illustrated by what Plutarch has told us of the means by which he acquired the mastery over his irascible passions. "I have always approved" (says he) "of the engagements and vows imposed on themselves from motives of religion, by certain philosophers, to abstain from wine, or from some other favorite indulgence, for the space of a year. I have also approved of the determination taken by others not to deviate from the truth, even in the lightest conversation, during a particular period. Comparing my own mind with theirs, and conscious that I yielded to none of them in reverence for God, I tasked myself, in the first instance, not to give way to anger upon any occasion for several days. I afterwards extended this resolution to a month or longer; and having thus made a trial of what I could do, I have learned at length never to speak but with gentleness, and so carefully to watch over my temper as never to purchase the short and unprofita-

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ble gratification of venting my resentment at the expense of a lasting and humiliating remorse."

I must not dismiss this topic without recommending, not merely to the perusal, but to the diligent study of all who have a taste for moral inquiries, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, in which he has examined, with far greater accuracy than any other author of antiquity, the nature of *habits* considered in their relation to our moral constitution. The whole treatise is indeed of great value, and, with the exception of a few passages, almost justifies the very warm and unqualified eulogium pronounced upon it by a learned divine (Dr. Rennel) before the University of Cambridge,—an eulogium in which he goes so very far as to assert of this work, "that it affords not only the most perfect specimen of scientific morality, but exhibits also the powers of the most compact and best constructed system *which the human intellect ever produced upon any subject;* enlivening occasionally great severity of method, and strict precision of terms, by the sublimest though soberest splendor of diction."

For the use of *English* readers an excellent translation of Aristotle's *Ethics* and also of his *Politics* has been published by Dr. Gillies; and indeed I do not know of any treatises, among the many remains of antiquity, which could have been selected as a more important accession to the stock of our national literature.

On an Ambiguity in the words Right and Wrong, Virtue and Vice.—The epithets Right and Wrong, Virtuous and Vicious, are applied sometimes to *external actions*, and sometimes to the *intentions of the agent.* A similar ambiguity may be remarked in the corresponding words in other languages.

This ambiguity is owing to various causes, which it is not necessary at present to trace. Among other circumstances,

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it is owing to the association of ideas, which, as it leads us to connect notions of elegance or of meanness with many arbitrary expressions in language, so it often leads us to connect notions of right and wrong with *external actions*, considered abstractly from the motives which produced them. It is owing (at least in part) to this, that a man who has been involuntarily the author of any calamity to another, can hardly by any reasoning banish his feelings of remorse; and, on the other hand, however wicked our *purposes* may have been, if by any accident we have been prevented from carrying them into execution, we are apt to consider ourselves as far less culpable than if we had perpetrated the crimes that we had intended. It is much in the same manner that we think it less criminal to mislead others by hints, or looks, or actions, than by a verbal lie; and in general, that we think our guilt diminished if we can only contrive to accomplish our ends without employing those external *signs*, or those external *means*, with which we have been accustomed to associate the notions of guilt and infamy. Shakespeare has painted with philosophical accuracy this natural subterfuge of a vicious mind, in which the sense of duty still retains some authority, in one of the exquisite scenes between King John and Hubert:

> "Hadst thou but shook thy head, and made a pause
> When I spake darkly what I purposed;
> Or turned an eye of doubt upon my face;
> Or bade me *tell my tale in express words;*
> Deep shame had struck me dumb, made me break off,
> And those thy fears might have wrought fears in me.
> But thou didst understand me *by my signs*,
> And Didst *in signs again parley with sin.*"

As the twofold application of the words Right and Wrong to the intentions of the mind, and to external actions, has a tendency, in the common business of life, to affect our opinions concerning the merits of individuals, so it has misled the

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theoretical speculations of some very eminent philosophers in their inquiries concerning the principles of morals. It was to obviate the confusion of ideas arising from this ambiguity of language that the distinction between *absolute and relative rectitude* was introduced into ethics; and as the distinction is equally just and important, it will be proper to explain it particularly, and to point out its application to one or two of the questions which have been perplexed by that vagueness of expression which it is our object at present to correct.

An action may be said to be absolutely right, when it is in every respect suitable to the circumstances in which the agent is placed; or, in other words, when it is such as, with perfectly good intentions, under the guidance of an enlightened and well-formed understanding, he would have performed.

An action may be said to be relatively right, when the intentions of the agent are sincerely good, whether his conduct be suitable to his circumstances or not.

According to these definitions, an action may be right in one sense and wrong in another; an ambiguity in language, which, how obvious soever, has not always been attended to by the writers on morals.

It is the relative rectitude of an action which determines the moral desert of the agent; but it is its absolute rectitude which determines its utility to his wordly interests, and to the welfare of society. And it is only so far as absolute and relative rectitude coincide, that utility can be affirmed to be a quality of virtue.

A strong sense of duty will indeed induce us to avail ourselves of all the talents we possess, and of all the information within our reach, to act agreeably to the rules of absolute rectitude. And if we fail in doing so, our negligence is criminal. "Crimes committed through ignorance," (as Aristotle has very judiciously observed,) "are only excusable when the

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ignorance is involuntary; for when the cause of it lies in ourselves, it is then justly punishable. The ignorance of those laws which all may know if they will, does not excuse the breach of them; and neglect is not pardonable where attention ought to be bestowed. But perhaps we are incapable of attention. This, however, is our own fault: since the incapacity has been contracted by our continual carelessness; as the evils of injustice and intemperance are contracted by the daily commission of iniquity, and the daily indulgence in voluptuousness. For such as our actions are, such must our habits become."

Notwithstanding, however, the truth and the importance of this doctrine, the general principle already stated remains incontrovertible, that in *every particular instance* our duty consists in doing what appears to us to be *right* at the time; and if, while we follow this rule, we should incur any blame, our demerit does not arise from acting according to an erroneous judgment, but from our previous misemployment of the means we possessed for correcting the errors to which our judgment is liable.

From these principles it follows, that actions, although materially right, are not meritorious with respect to the agent, unless performed from a sense of duty. This conclusion, indeed, has been disputed by Mr. Hume, upon grounds which I cannot stop to examine; but its truth is necessarily implied in the foregoing reasonings, and it is perfectly consonant to the sentiments of the soundest moralists, both ancient and modern. Aristotle inculcates this doctrine in many parts of his Ethics. In one passage he represents it as essential to virtuous actions, that the actions are done ἑνεκα τε καλε; and in another place he says, εστι γαρ αυτη ἡ συμβαξια στλος.

To the same purpose, also, Lord Shaftesbury. "In this case alone it is we call any creature worthy or virtuous, when it

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can attain to the speculation or sense of what is morally good or ill, admirable or blameable, right or wrong. For though we may vulgarly call an ill horse vicious, yet we never say of a good one, nor of any mere changeling or idiot, though never so good-natured, that he is worthy or virtuous. So that if a creature be generous, kind, constant, and compassionate, yet, if he cannot reflect on what he himself does or sees others do, so as to take notice of what is worthy and honest, and make that notice or conception of worth and honesty to be an object of his affection, he has not the character of being virtuous, for thus, and no otherwise, he is capable of having a sense of right or wrong," And elsewhere he observes, "that if that which restrains a person and holds him to a virtuous-like behavior, be no affection towards virtue or goodness itself, but towards private good merely, he is not in reality the more virtuous." *Stewart's Active and Moral Powers, p.* 443

(35.) CHAPTER ON THE NATURE OF VIRTUE—FROM BISHOP BUTLER.

That which renders beings capable of moral government, is their having a moral nature, and moral faculties of perception and of action. Brute creatures are impressed and actuated by various instincts and propensions: so also are we.—But, additional to this, we have a capacity of reflecting upon actions and characters, and making them an object to our thought: and on our doing this, we naturally and unavoidably approve some actions, under the peculiar view of their being virtuous and of good desert; and disapprove others, as vicious and of ill desert. That we have this moral approving and disapproving faculty, is certain from our experiencing it in ourselves, and recognizing it in each other. It appears from our exercising it unavoidably, in the approbation and disapprobation even of feigned characters: from the words, right and wrong, odious and amiable, base and worthy, with

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many others of like signification in all languages, applied to actions and characters: from the many written systems of morals which suppose it; since it cannot be imagined, that all these authors, throughout all these treatises, had abosolutely no meaning at all to their words, or a meaning merely chimerical: from our natural sense of gratitude, which implies a distinction between merely being the instrument of good, and intending it: from the like distinction, every one makes, between injury and mere harm, which, Hobbes says, is peculiar to mankind; and between injury and just punishment—a distinction plainly natural prior to the consideration of human laws. It is manifest, great part of common language, and of common behaviour, over the world, is formed upon supposition of such a moral faculty; whether called conscience, moral reason, moral sense, or divine reason; whether considered as a sentiment of the understanding, or as a perception of the heart, or, which seems the truth, as including both. Nor is it at all doubtful, in the general, what course of action this faculty, or practical discerning power within us approves, and what it disapproves. For, as much as it has been disputed wherein virtue consists, or whatever ground for doubt there may be about particulars, yet, in general, there is in reality an universally acknowledged standard of it. It is that which all ages and all countries have made profession of in public; it is that which every man you meet puts on the show of; it is that which the primary and fundamental laws of all civil constitutions, over the face of the earth make it their business and endeavour to enforce the practice of upon mankind; namely, justice, veracity, and regard to common good. It being manifest then, in general, that we have such a faculty or discernment as this, it may be of use to remark some things, more distinctly, concerning it.

1st. It ought to be observed, that the object of this faculty is actions, comprehending under that name, active or practical

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principles; those principles from which men would act, if occasions and circumstances gave them power; and which, when fixed and habitual in any person, we call his character. It does not appear that brutes have the least reflex sense of actions as distinguished from events; or that will and design, which constitute the very nature of actions as such, are at all an object to their perception. But to ours they are; and they are the object, and the only one, of the approving and disapproving faculty. Acting, conduct, behaviour, abstracted from all regard to what is, in fact and event, the consequence of it, is itself the natural object of the moral discernment, as speculative truth and falsehood is of speculative reason. Intention of such and such consequences, indeed, is always included; for it is part of the action itself; but though the intended good or bad consequences do not follow, we have exactly the same sense of the action as if they did. In like manner, we think well or ill of characters, abstracted from all consideration of the good or evil, which persons of such characters have it actually in their power to do. We never, in the moral way, applaud or blame either ourselves or others, for what we enjoy or what we suffer, or for having impressions made upon us which we consider as altogether out of my power; but only for what we do or would have done, had it been in our power; or for what we leave undone which we might have done, or would have left undone though we could have done it.

2d. Our sense or discernment of actions, as morally good or evil, implies in it a sense or discernment of them as of good or ill desert. It may be difficult to explain this perception, so as to answer all the questions which may be asked concerning it; but every one speaks of such and such actions as deserving punishment; and it is not, I suppose, pretended, that they have absolutely no meaning at all to the expression. Now, the meaning plainly is not, that we conceive it for the

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good of society that the doer of such actions should be made to suffer: for if unhappily it were resolved, that a man who, by some innocent action, was infected with the plague, should be left to perish, lest, by other people coming near him, the infection should spread; no one would say he deserved this treatment. Innocence and ill desert are inconsistent ideas. Ill desert always supposes guilt; and if one be not part of the other, yet they are evidently and naturally connected in our mind. The sight of a man in misery raises our compassion towards him; and, if this misery be inflicted on him by another, our indgination against the author of it. But when we are informed that the sufferer is a villain, and is punished only for his treachery or cruelty, our compassion exceedingly lessens, and, in many instances, our indignation wholly subsides. Now, what produces this effect is the conception of that in the sufferer which we call ill desert. Upon considering, then, or viewing together, our notion of vice and that of misery, there results a third, that of ill desert. And thus there is in human creatures an association of the two ideas, natural and moral evil, wickedness and punishment. If this association were merely artificial or accidental, it were nothing; but being most unquestionably natural, it greatly concerns us to attend to it, instead of endeavoring to explain it away.

3d. Without inquiring how far, and in what sense, virtue is resolvable into benevolence, and vice into the want of it; it may be proper to observe, that benevolence, and the want of it, singly considered, are in no sort the whole of virtue and vice. For if this were the case, in the review of one's own character, or that of others, our moral understanding and moral sense would be indifferent to everything, but the degrees in which benevolence permitted, and the degress in which it was wanting. That is, we should neither approve of benevolence to some persons rather than to others,

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nor disapprove injustice and falsehood, upon any other account, than merely as an overbalance of happiness was foreseen likely to be produced by the first, and of misery by the second. But now, on the contrary, suppose two men competitors for anything whatever, which would be of equal advantage to each of them; though nothing, indeed, would be more impertinent than for a stranger to busy himself to get one of them preferred to the other, yet such endeavor would be virtue, in behalf of a friend or benefactor, abstracted from all consideration of distant consequences; as that examples of gratitude, and the cultivation of friendship, would be of general good to the world. Again, suppose one man should by fraud or violence, take from another the fruit of his labor, with intent to give it to a third, who, he thought, would have as much pleasure from it as would balance the pleasure which the first possessor would have had in the enjoyment, and his vexation in the loss of it; suppose also, that no bad consequences would follow; yet such an action would surely be vicious. Nay, farther, were treachery, violence, and injustice, no otherwise vicious than as foreseen likely to produce an overbalance of misery to society; then, if in any case a man could procure to himself so great advantage by an act of injustice, as the whole foreseen inconvenience likely to be brought upon others by it would amount to, such a piece of injustice would not be faulty or vicious at all, because it would be no more than, in any other case, for a man to prefer his own satisfaction to another's in equal degrees. The fact, then, appears to be, that we are constituted so as to condemn falsehood, unprovoked violence, injustice, and to approve of benevolence to some, preferably to others, abstracted from all consideration which conduct is likeliest to produce an overbalance of happiness or misery. And therefore, were the Author of nature to propose nothing to himself as an end but the production of happiness—were his moral character

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merely that of benevolence; yet ours is not so. Upon that supposition, indeed, the only reason of his giving us the above-mentioned approbation of benevolence to some persons rather than others, and disapprobation of falsehood, unprovoked violence, and injustice, must be, that he foresaw this constitution of our nature would produce more happiness than forming us with a temper of mere general benevolence. But still, since this is our constitution, falsehood, violence, injustice, must be vice in us, and benevolence to some preferably to others, virtue, abstracted from all consideration of the overbalance of evil or good which they may appear likely to produce.

Now, if human creatures are endued with such a moral nature as we have been explaining, or with a moral faculty, the natural object of which is actions; moral government must consist in rendering them happy and unhappy, in rewarding and punishing them, as they follow, neglect, or depart from the moral rule of action interwoven in their nature, or suggested and enforced by this moral faculty; in rewarding and punishing them upon account of their so doing.

I am not sensible that I have, in this fifth observation, contradicted what any author designed to assert. But some of great and distinguished merit have, I think, expressed themselves in a manner which may occasion some danger to careless readers, of imagining the whole of virtue to consist in singly aiming, according to the best of their judgment, at promoting the happiness of mankind in the present state; and the whole of vice, in doing what they foresee, or might foresee, is likely to produce an overbalance of unhappiness in it;—than which mistakes none can be conceived more terrible. For it is certain, that some of the most shocking instances of injustice, adultery, murder, perjury, and even of persecution, may, in many supposable cases, not have the appearance of being likely to produce an overbalance of mis-

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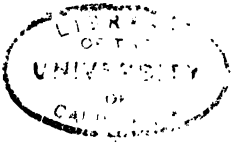
ery in the present state; perhaps sometimes may have the contrary appearance. For this reflection might easily be carried on; but I forbear——The happiness of the world is the concern of him who is the Lord and the Proprietor of it; nor do we know what we are about, when we endeavor to promote the good of mankind in any ways but those which he has directed; that is, indeed, in all ways not contrary to veracity and justice. I speak thus upon supposition of persons really endeavoring, in some sort, to do good without regard to these. But the truth seems to be, that such supposed endeavors proceed almost always from ambition, the spirit of party, or some indirect principle, concealed perhaps in great measure from persons themselves. And though it is our business and our duty to endeavor, within the bounds of veracity and justice, to contribute to the ease, convenience, and even cheerfulness and diversion of our fellow-creatures; yet, from our short views, it is greatly uncertain whether this endeavor will, in particular instances, produce an overbalance of happiness upon the whole; since so many and distant things must come into the account. And that which makes it our duty is, that there is some appearance that it will, and no positive appearance sufficient to balance this on the contrary side; and also, that such benevolent endeavor is a cultivation of that most excellent of all virtuous principles, the active principle of benevolence. *Butler's Works, p.* 270.



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